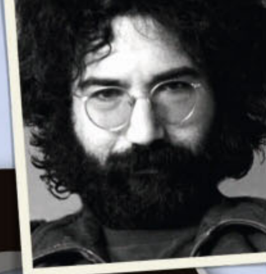
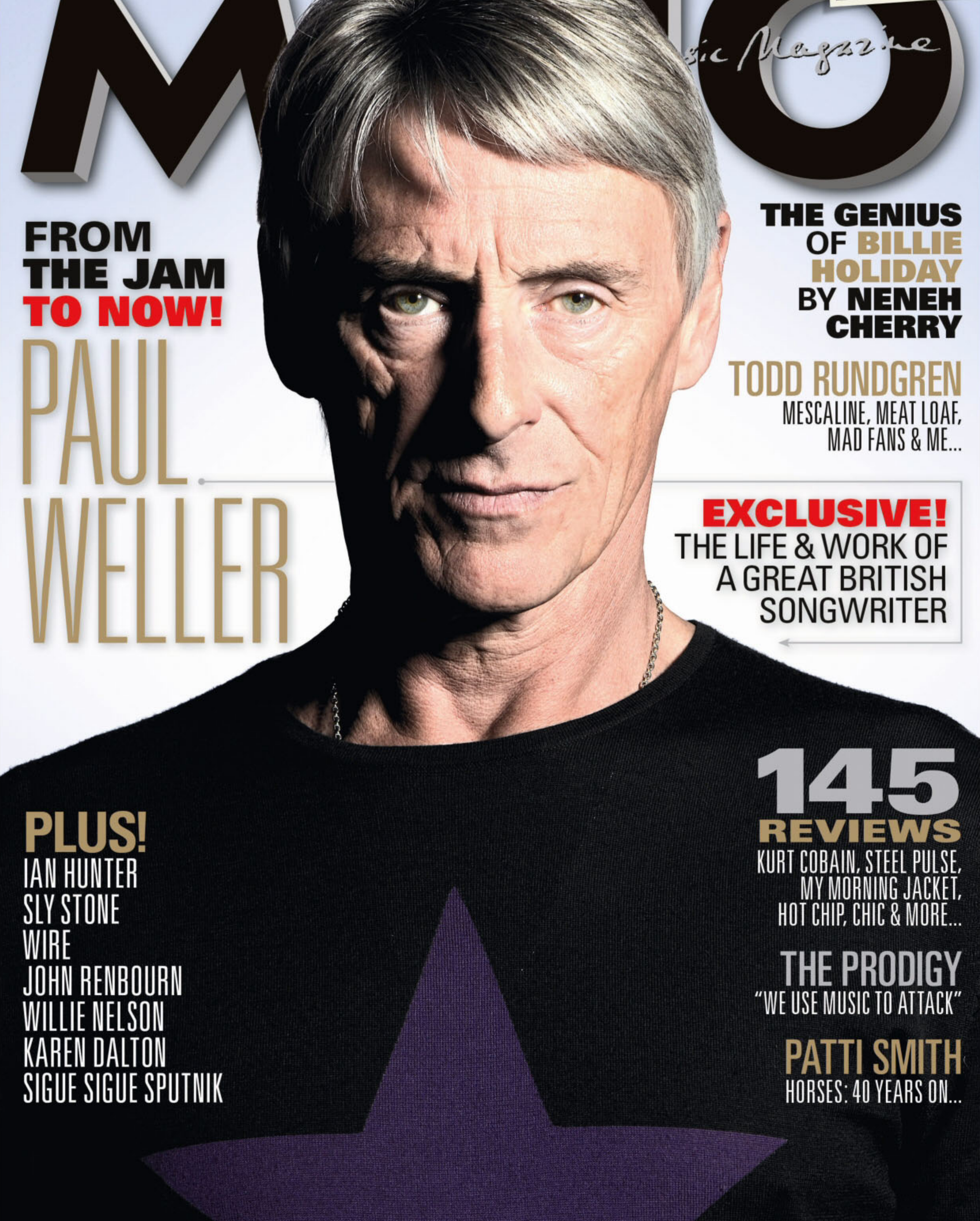
MOJO
Music Magazine

GRATEFUL DEAD THEIR FIRST TRIP
+ YOUR GUIDE TO THEIR MOST MINDBENDING MUSIC





FROM THE JAM TO NOW!
PAUL WELLER

EXCLUSIVE!
THE LIFE & WORK OF A GREAT BRITISH SONGWRITER

THE GENIUS OF BILLIE HOLIDAY BY NENEH CHERRY

TODD RUNDGREN
MESCALINE, MEAT LOAF, MAD FANS & ME...

145 REVIEWS
KURT COBAIN, STEEL PULSE, MY MORNING JACKET, HOT CHIP, CHIC & MORE...

THE PRODIGY
"WE USE MUSIC TO ATTACK"

PATTI SMITH
HORSES: 40 YEARS ON...

PLUS!
IAN HUNTER
SLY STONE
WIRE
JOHN RENBOURN
WILLIE NELSON
KAREN DALTON
SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK

MY MORNING JACKET
THE WATERFALL

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> "I never wanted to get bored. I still don't. That's part of the fun."

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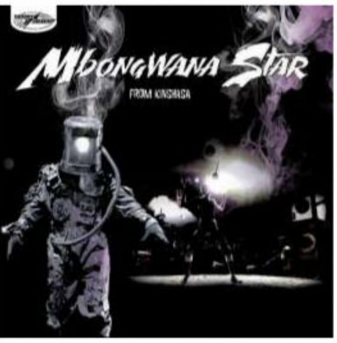

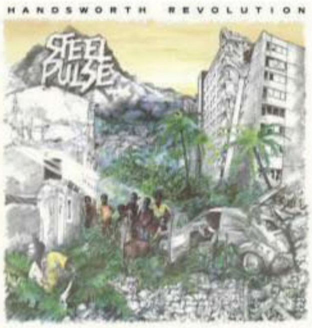

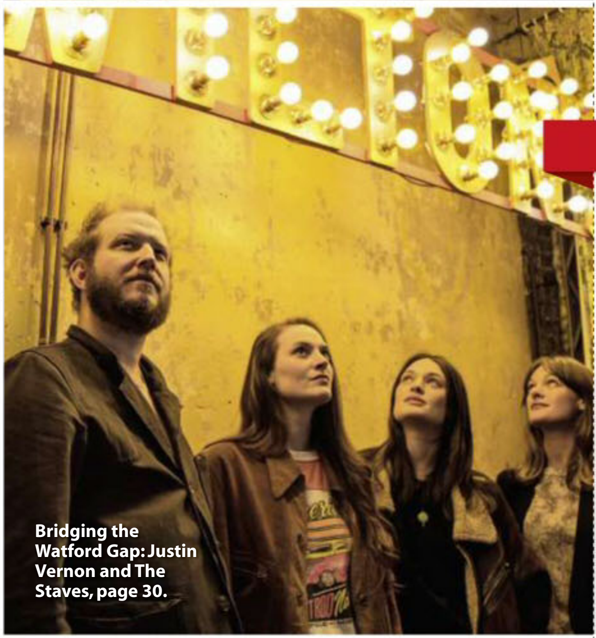

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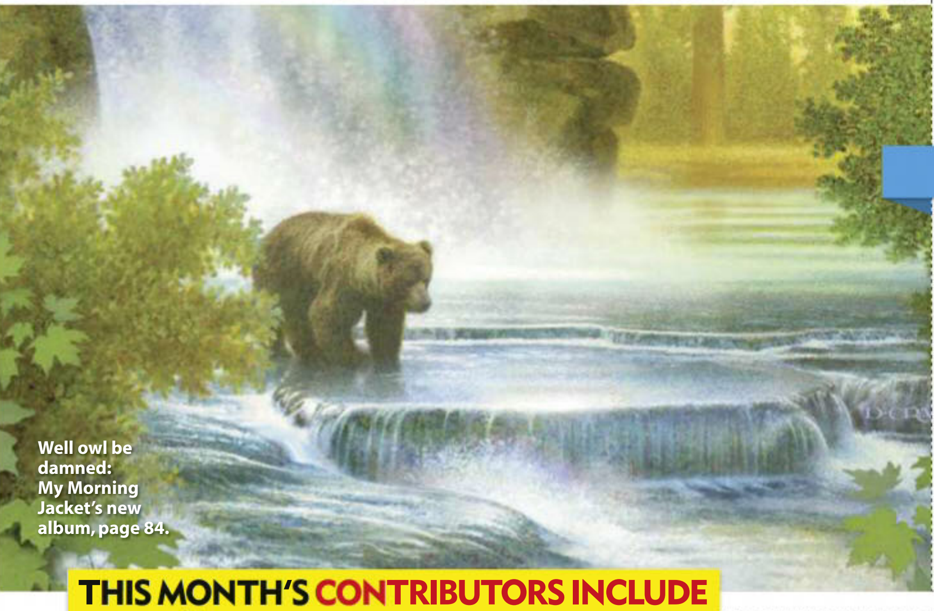

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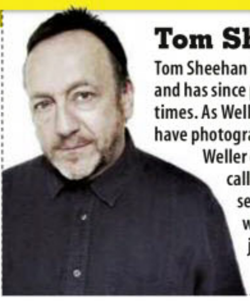


Tom Sheehan

Tom Sheehan first met Paul Weller in 1978, and has since photographed him over 30 times. As Weller once said, "Tommy, you have photographed me from boy to man." Weller got involved in the shoot, calling Tom before the 100 Club session to ask what clobber to wear. "As always, a great subject to photograph," says Tom. www.tomsheehan.co.uk

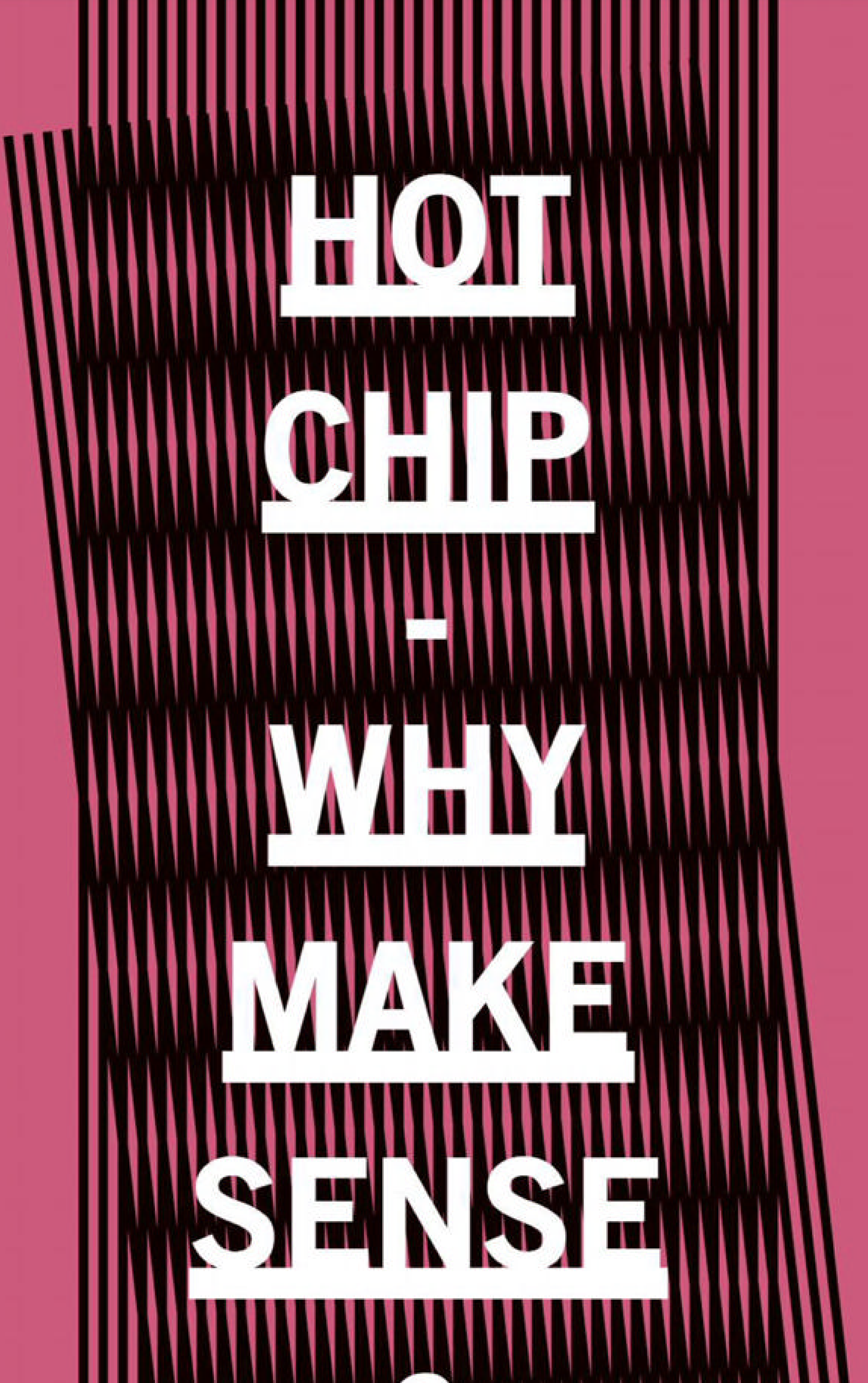
Ian Hunter

In 1972 Mott The Hoople's frontman Ian Hunter wrote a warts-an'-all music memoir, Diary Of A Rock'n'Roll Star. This month, he files an exclusive follow-up documenting his first-ever Japanese tour which took place earlier this year. Read it on page 58, then visit www.ian-hunter.com for news on his forthcoming 30 CD box set.

Jesse Jarnow

Jesse Jarnow (@bourgwick) is the author of Big Day Coming: Yo La Tengo And The Rise Of Indie Rock (Gotham, 2012). Da Capo will publish his next book Heads: A Biography Of Psychedelic America in 2016. He hosts the Frow Show show on US freeform radio station WFMU.

Florrie Sheehan, Carsten Windhorst, Ross Halfin, Andrew Cotterill



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FEATURING NEU!, SUN RA, SYD ARTHUR, CHARLES MINGUS, PANDA BEAR, TEMPLES & MORE!

1 TOY

Motoring

Toy's emergence in 2011 coincided with a new psychedelic undercurrent in British music as a number of acts absorbed '60s and '70s influences, welding them to a lo-fi, shoegazing '80s aesthetic to create an expansive and pop-centric sound. Motoring, the Brighton-formed outfit's second single, out in 2012, is typyical of the movement, its swirling, picked intro leading to a Krautrock drive underpinned by subtle textures, topped by Tom Dougall's languid vocal.

Available on: *TOY* (HEAVENLY)

2 Syd Arthur

Ode (Summer Is Leaving Me Behind) [Amorphous Androgynous Remix]

The Paul Weller/Syd Arthur mutual appreciation society saw the former invite the band on tour and work with them in the studio (they also appear on *Saturns Pattern*). This track followed a meeting at Weller's studio in 2011 between SA and psychsters Amorphous Androgynous, who remixed and amplified its deep groove.

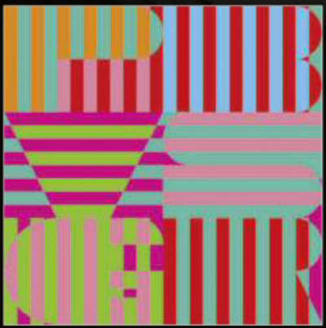
Available on: *Syd Arthur: A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble Remixes by The Amorphous Androgynous*

3 Temples

Sand Dance (Beyond The Wizard's Sleeve Reanimation)

Kettering's ambassadors of new psych have also received Weller's nods of approval down the years – their *Sun Structures* debut a highlight of 2014. This tune, from the remix album of that first LP, is a reworking by DJ duo Beyond The Wizard's Sleeve (aka Erol Alkan and Richard Norris) who extend the original – adding a sparse, brooding intro before drilling back to the track's elemental lurch, James Bagshaw's vocal restoring optimism.

Available on: *Sun Restructured* (HEAVENLY)



4 Panda Bear

Butcher Baker Candlestick Maker

In recent interviews Weller has name-checked *Panda Bear Meets The Grim Reaper*, the recently released effort by the Animal Collective co-founder. Co-produced by Spaceman 3's Sonic Boom, the album is a lush musical affair, its lyrics both personal and escapist. As this harmony-rich tune proves, the LP reflects an endlessly restless musician at work – which Weller no doubt identifies with.

Available on: *Panda Bear Meets The Grim Reaper* (DOMINO)

9 Basil Kirchin

Primitive London 2

Born in Blackpool in 1927 and schooled in jazz, Basil Kirchin was a man ahead of his time. Moving far beyond his roots as the drummer in his father's big band, by the mid '60s he'd embarked on soundtrack work, including Primitive London – Arnold Miller's reflection on the city's sexually exploitative underbelly. One of Kirchin's most direct offerings, this tune's late-night feel evokes Oscar Wilde's sentiment of lying in the gutter while looking at the stars.

Available on: *Primitive London OST*

10 Charles Mingus

Passions Of A Man

When Weller appeared on the BBC's Desert Island Discs in 2007, he chose Charles Mingus's Better Get Hit In Yo' Soul as one of his must-have tunes. This time, he selects a 1961 track that finds the Arizona-born genius at his most experimental. The tune starts with whizzing, squalling musical chaos – the vocals vacillating between cod Spanish and *Mingus-ese* – prior to his becalming piano passage that brings the track to an almost stately close.

11 Erland & The Carnival

Radiation

Mingus's piano conclusion leads into the beauteous intro to Radiation, an outstanding track from Erland & The Carnival's third full-length album, 2014's *Closing Time*, to which Weller contributed. Formed in 2008 by Orcadian songwriter Erland Cooper and guitarist Simon Tong (ex-Verve, and The Good, The Bad & The Queen), the Carnival make intimate that's full of progressive intent, as Radiation magnificently demonstrates.

Available on: *Closing Time* (FULL TIME HOBBY)

12 Serpent Power

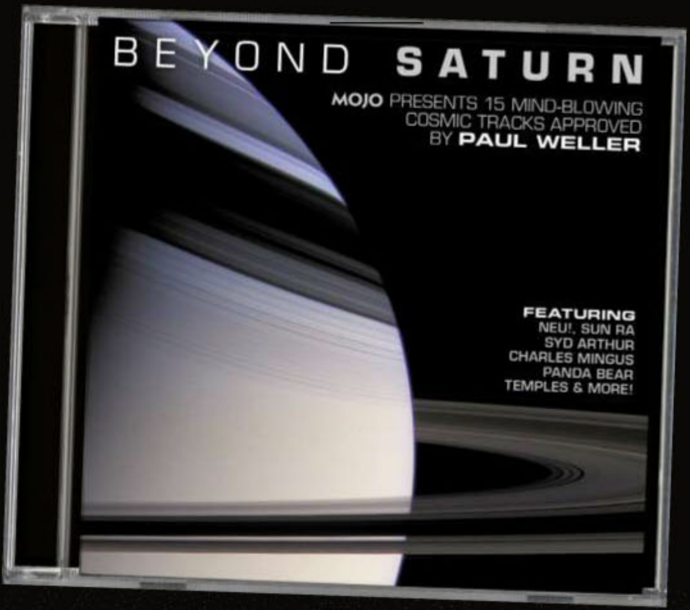
Lucifer's Dreambox

Liverpool has long been a hotbed of psychedelic fermentation, the latest product of which is Serpent Power – a melding of minds between The Coral's Ian Kelly and The Zuton's Paul Molloy. Their debut album is infused with the fuzz experimentation of this track, Lucifer's Dreambox splitting in two at approximately the midway point, the second movement defined by a baroque choral arrangement set against a neo-electronic backdrop – the effect is expansive and dazzling.

Available on: *Serpent Power* (SKELETON KEY)

Alamy (4), Getty Images

DURING THE COURSE OF AN AVERAGE PERSON'S lifetime the planet Saturn returns twice to the same position it held when that person was born – once when the individual is 28, the second when they turn 56. Paul Weller turns 56 on May 25, the week after the release of his new album, *Saturns Pattern*. The album sees the ever-restless songwriter heading further out there than ever before. To coincide with that release, MOJO asked Paul to help us compile a companion disc of cosmic mindblowers. He duly obliged, sending us a selection of tunes he'd like to see on there. MOJO added a few and gave Paul final approval. Welcome, then to *Beyond Saturn!* – an exclusive 15-track collection that promises to take you on a trip to the outer limits…



5 NEU!

Negativland

Weller discovered '70s German underground music late in his career, but Neu!'s influence was evident on his last studio offering, 2012's *Sonik Kicks* (Green and Around The Lake). This gargantuan track – from Neu!'s groundbreaking, self-titled 1972 debut – begins with a sound collage that segues into drummer Klaus Dinger's trademarked *lange gerade* ("long straight") beat which drives Michael Rother's slashing, phased chords played on a Japanese koto.

Available on: *Neu!* (GRÖNLAND)

6 Public Service Broadcasting

Gagarin

London-based electronic art-rock duo J Willgoose Esq and Wrigglesworth have always drawn on a more innocent time for inspiration, their second album – *The Race For Space* – harking back to man's first intergalactic adventures. Their homage to the first man in space, Gagarin mixes an irresistible get-down groove, horn stabs and evocative news-footage samples in a fine tribute to "The hero who blazed the trail to the stars".

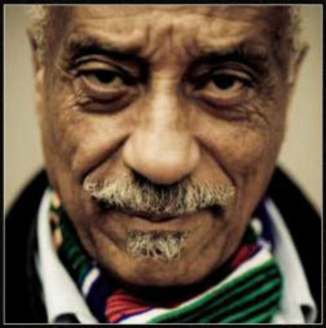
Available on: *The Race For Space* (TEST CARD)

7 Ryley Walker

Same Minds

American songwriter and guitarist Ryley Walker reminds us of a latter-day John Martyn, both in his playing style and in terms of the inner conflict that appears to drive him. This track – taken from his wondrous second album, *Primrose Green* (named after a potent whiskey-based cocktail) – exemplifies his ability to meld folk with jazz in a manner that is both supple and soulful. Equally, he retains sense of danger, musical and otherwise.

Available on: *Primrose Green* (DEAD OCEANS)



8 Mulatu Astatke

Yekatit

Producer Francis Falceto launched his acclaimed *Ethiopiques* compilation series in 1997, issuing close to 30 volumes of music that brought late '60s and '70s Ethiopian sounds to a wider audience, re-establishing the career of musicians including the godfather of Ethio-jazz, Mulatu Astatke. Weller's absorption of Ethiopian music began with these compilations and radio station he discovered during a US trip, hence this soulful, intoxicating Astatke tune's appearance here.

Available on: *Discovery Records*

13 Supefjord

A Love Supreme

Jazz colossus John Coltrane is another of Weller's heroes and we couldn't resist including this heavy, kosmiche take on 'Trane's most celebrated offering, reworked by Helsinki-based psychedelic jazz-rockers Superfjord. It first came to our attention on a 7-inch released by our pal SuperKeith at Fruits De Mer Records (a bastion of all things psych, and all things vinyl). Superfjord's debut album, *It Is Dark, But I Have This Jewel*, is also highly recommended.

Available on: *Coltrane 7-inch* (FRUITS DE MER)

14 Santo & Johnny

Sleep Walk

It was their father who suggested they should pick up an instrument when, while in the army, he heard a steel guitar on the radio. The elder of the Farina brothers, Santo, duly obliged and was soon accompanied by his younger brother, Johnny. This track, which topped the US chart in the winter of 1959, has retained all its hypnagogic power down the years, and transports the listener each and every time, hence Weller's insistence we include it on this compilation.

Available on: *Santo & Johnny*

15 Sun Ra And His Arkestra

Tapestry From An Asteroid

To close, Saturn's very own ambassador of Afro-futurism was an obvious choice. But which track to actually select? This intergalactic lullaby from 1961, produced by Tom Wilson (later famed for his work with Dylan, The Velvet Underground et al), is a fine end to a thrilling journey that has reached for music both other-worldy and emotionally engaging. .

Available on: *The Futuristic Sounds Of Sun Ra: Angels And Demons At Play, The Nubians Of Plutonia*

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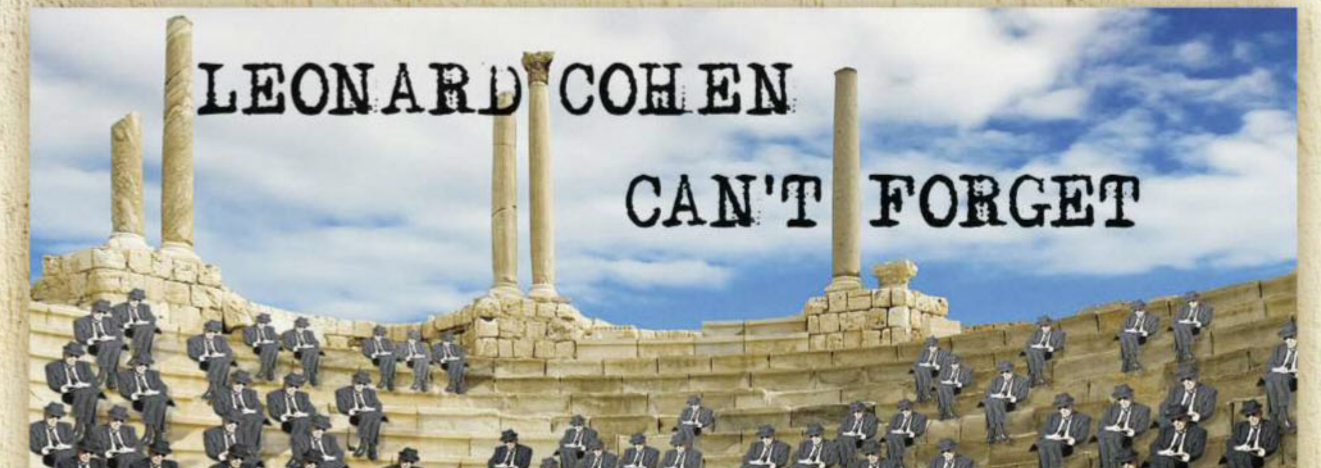
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ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Buffy Sainte-Marie

MUSICIAN, ACTIVIST, MORRISSEY FAVE

What music are you currently grooving to?

Paolo Nutini, I love *Caustic Love*. He's hardly known in North America, but I just got back from Europe where he's big – I'm still enjoying that album.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Can I have two? *Sketches Of Spain* by **Miles Davis** and **The Beatles**' *Sgt. Pepper*. What I like about records is originality. I had never heard anything like *Sketches Of Spain* – I'm a big fan of Miles and **Gil Evans** – I never tire of it. *Sgt. Pepper* sounded so different, even to other Beatles records.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I don't know – **Tchaikovsky**'s Swan Lake when I was three (*laughs*)? But I wouldn't have bought that myself… The first one I can remember changing my life was in 1956, Heartbreak Hotel by **Elvis Presley**. I bought it in my local record store in Maine, on the Canadian border.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

A bunch of people, but, Elvis Presley! **Edith Piaf**, **Carmen Amaya**…

What do you sing in the shower?

Always something no one's heard before, and I've never heard before. Something I make up. I do the same in aeroplanes, when I'm asleep. It's when new music pops into my head.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

I'm a big fan of **Alabama 3**, they're my good friends. My new album has the same title [and title track] as their *Power In The Blood*. I turned this bloody, violent song into a peace song. I watched The Sopranos all through so I could hear the song again at the end.

And your Sunday morning record?

Xavier Rudd, an Australian artist, a drummer who plays other instruments, and a loop station. He does a one-man show that can blow you away. He's great live and on record.

Buffy's Power In The Blood is out on May 18

Paul Hardcastle

N-N-N-N-NINETEEN FOREVER

What music are you currently grooving to?

My favourite, an old one, **Andain**, it's chilled-out Ibiza but they have something different going on, really good choruses. I've just bought the *Meddle* reissue by **Pink Floyd**. I met **David Gilmour** while checking out of a hotel in the south of France. He looked over and said hello. I melted like a schoolboy.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

The Dark Side Of The Moon – it was the most innovative thing I'd ever heard. On The Run used tape loops, the cash register sound on Money… Gilmour said to me, "Didn't you use our cash register on one of your records [Just For Money]?" I nicked loads of stuff from them (*laughs*).

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

It was **Matthews Southern Comfort**'s Woodstock, at a record shop in Warwick Way near where I lived in Pimlico, SW1. I don't know where I got the money from – probably raided my dad's coin collection. He was a trumpet player and dancer.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

David Gilmour. You listen to the first four notes of Shine On You Crazy Diamond… you don't have to burn up the fretboard at 100mph. And **Phil Lynott**, I worked with him [on Lynott's Nineteen], a really nice man. He gave me his jukebox as a wedding present.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't, it's not my forte. I leave that to other people who can.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Gonna Make You Sweat by **C+C Music Factory**. Or a chilled track, an Ibiza thing from Pacha.

And your Sunday morning record?

My favourite is Voyage To Atlantis by **The Isley Brothers**, from *Go For Your Guns*, Zoom by **The Commodores**, **Whitney Houston**'s Dancin' On The Smooth Edge, a B-side far from her pop stuff.

Matt Barnes, Photoshot

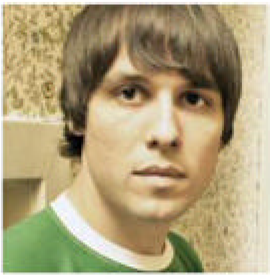
The PTSD 2015 Remix of 19 is out on NUA Entertainment.

NOW PLAYING

- Buffy Sainte-Marie digs Alabama 3's 2002 LP *Power In The Blood* on a Saturday night, so much so she's covered the title track.
- Paul Hardcastle's all-time favourite LP is the Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon* – an album he was quizzed about sampling by David Gilmour.
- Nirvana fan Gary Jarman also enjoys Krist Novoselic's 1997 album *Sweet 75* on a Sunday morn.

Gary Jarman

CRIB BASS AND VOICE



What music are you currently grooving to?

Chastity Belt – I've been into them for two or three years. I first heard the song Seattle Party on KEXP, a Seattle college station, and I loved it. Feeling out of place at Seattle parties; it spoke to me on so many levels. Also Leeds band **Esper Scout**.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

In Utero by **Nirvana**. The fact it came out just before Kurt died. It was the first record I ever psychoanalysed. I was 13, acutely aware of lyrics for the first time, and the approach sonically was a big influence. Another is *Réalistes* by **Comet Gain**.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Somewhere In My Heart by **Aztec Camera**. I went to Pontin's holiday camp when I was seven in 1988, and I kept hearing this song on the jukebox. When I got home I went to our local Boots and sang it to the woman behind the counter.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Dee Dee Ramone – he was the heartbeat of the band. I never wanted to be a bass player, but he was the archetype of the cool bass player. He was their leader in many ways.

What do you sing in the shower?

Whatever's stuck in my head. Cheesy '80s pop like [**Berlin**'s] Take My Breath Away, [**Martika**'s] Toy Soldiers. On tour, I do vocal warm-ups. The hotel staff must wonder what's going on!

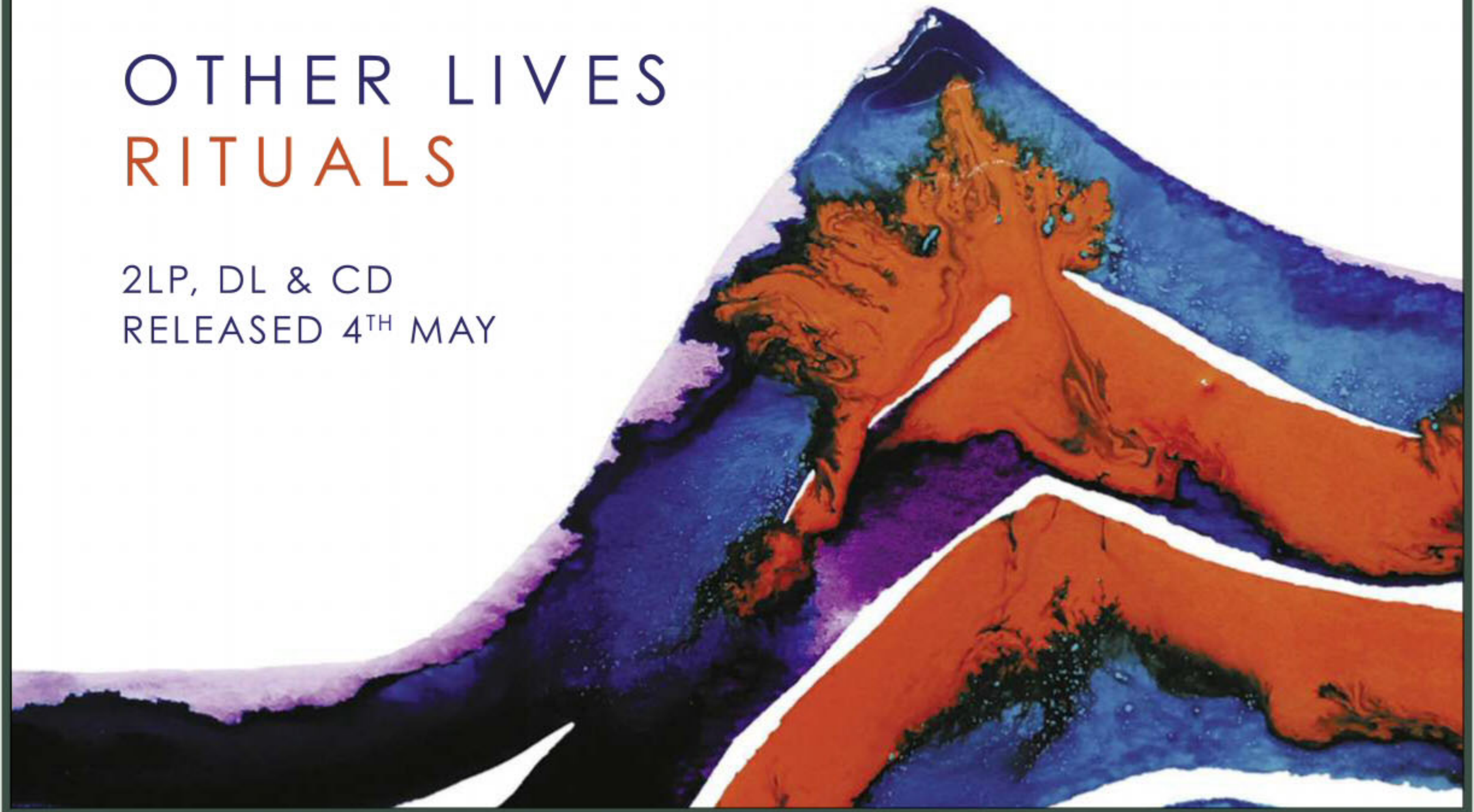
What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Shattered, a compilation of the Portland band **The Exploding Hearts**, who had a tragic story [three members died in a car crash in 2003]. There's a melodic, nostalgic side to them.

And your favourite Sunday morning record?

Krist Novoselic's post-Nirvana band, **Sweet 75**. It's peculiar music – Venezuelan folk, a bit country, Byrdsy, a mish-mash. I played it a lot at 17 as a disenfranchised Nirvana fan. Also, Portland supergroup **Eyelids**.

The Cribs' For All My Sisters is out now on Sony.



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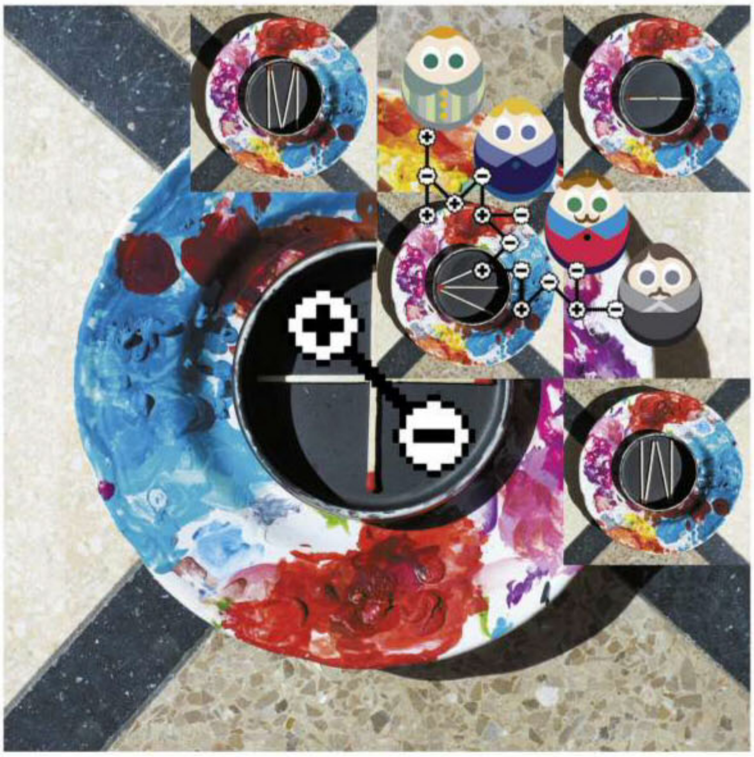

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Martin Aston, Mike Barnes, Glyn Brown, David Buckley, John Bungey, Keith Cameron, Andrew Carden, Neneh Cherry, Stevie Chick, Andy Cowan, Ian Crichton, Fred Dellar, Tom Doyle, Priya Elan, Paul Elliott, Andy Fyfe, Pat Gilbert, David Hutcheon, Will Hodgkinson, Chris Ingham, Jim Irvin, Colin Irwin, Jesse Jarnow, David Katz, Pete Makowski, James McNair, Bob Mehr, Ben Myers, Mark Paytress, Andrew Perry, Tony Russell, Jon Savage, Victoria Segal, David Sheppard, Michael Simmons, Sylvie Simmons, Phil Sutcliffe, Jeff Tamarkin, Ben Thompson, Johnny Trunk, Kieron Tyler, Charles Waring, Roy Wilkinson, Lois Wilson, Anna Wood, Stephen Worthy

Among this month's photographers:
Blur cover: Tom Sheehan (thanks to Geoff at 100 Club); Grateful Dead cover: Baron Wolman James R Anderson, Andrew Cotterill, Piper Ferguson, Simon Fernandez, William Gottlieb, Herb Greene, Bob Gruen, Steve Gullick, Ross Halfin, Tom Oldham, Flavien Prioreau, Lauren Rodriguez, Nic Serpell-Rand, Ian Tilton, Lawrence Watson, Carsten Windhorst

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THEORIES, RANTS, ETC.

MOJO welcomes letters for publication. Write to us at: Mojo Mail, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG. E-mail: mojo@bauermedia.co.uk

THIS MONTH WE HAVE MOSTLY BEEN losing our minds in the company of musicians whose work has managed to transport us and, in some cases, freak us out. Paul Weller is, of course, among those musicians, his latest offering, *Saturns Pattern*, marking the next chapter in a career which has been characterised by restless enthusiasm. Paul has also take the time to help us compile *Beyond Saturn*, the cosmic collection designed to soundtrack this month's issue. His selection of artists ranging from Erland & The Carnival to Charles Mingus via Santo & Johnny has helped create a unique listening experience. Tune into it, and lose yourself in a world of mind-blowing music. Space is indeed the place…

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In a sensational turn of events

As a music obsessive of many years, lately I've been tiring of the endless 'classic' rock articles – Zeppelin, Floyd, Beatles, Stones, etc – and features on the latest bearded band playing folk/country/Americana/hillbilly bollocks. So it was a surprise to pick up MOJO 258 and see a varied mix of great articles and interviews with Blur, the great Jerry Dammers, Giorgio Moroder… even the Beach Boys article kept my interest, focusing on their '70s lost years instead of yet another *Pet Sounds/Smile* piece. Well done on this issue. More like it please.

Scoops, Nottingham, via e-mail

The judge meant to jail them

Blur may well be significant in pop history, thus meriting your cover feature [MOJO 258]. But they'll never be a great group. Simply, whichever way you look at it, Damon Albarn can't sing.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

A record company of their choice

The lost period of The Beach Boys is my favourite, and Domenic Priore's piece [MOJO 258] will hopefully make people investigate some incredible music, especially the unreleased material. How wrong Warners were in not releasing the *Adult/Child* album, as that probably broke Brian Wilson's productive stride in the late '70s. His subsequent decline is heavily talked about in the forthcoming biopic [Love & Mercy], which I will avoid. As Mike Love once said, "If you weren't there, you didn't know anything." Some Beach Boys history is best left undisturbed, so let the music do the talking.

Chris Triggs, via e-mail

To face the music press

Thanks for Mick Houghton's great piece on Sandy Denny and Fairport Convention. It was good to see the warm-up gig in Plymouth mentioned, though your writer has fallen into the same trap as many others. The club was called Van Dike (not Dyke) and wasn't named after a painter but the family that ran the club. For many years the Van Dike club was the local home of the then underground rock scene. Along with Mothers in Birmingham and Friars in Aylesbury, it was one of the top gigs outside London. The old gig posters read like a who's-who of music from that time, and the club still has a strong following on Facebook. Keep up the good work.

Roy Perring, via e-mail

Truth has spoken

After being berated by my wife for 40 years for steaming up the bathroom when running a bath, I took Graham Gouldman's advice [Rock'n'Roll Confidential, MOJO 258]… It worked! This is the most singularly practical information I have gleaned from the music press in half-a-century. It opens up a new area of journalism – Handy Household Hints From Rock Stars Past And Present. Thanks to Mr Gouldman and keep up the good work MOJO.

David Ward, Leeds

To remain as rejects

Just a note of support regarding Tim Jones's letter [Theories, Rants, Etc MOJO 258] – please heed his call for an article about the mighty Man. Never were, and still aren't, hip or trendy, but they're consistently excellent, exciting and frequently hilarious. Can it be written by someone who knows what they're talking about, unlike whoever stated ➢

< that *Unhalfbricking* was Fairport Convention's debut [caption p53, MOJO 258]? I mean, come on folks! Other than that, keep up the sterling work.
Chris Symonds, via e-mail

An idiotic mistake. Apologies to everyone who spotted it.

One of the finest I've ever seen

I was pleased to see the reference to the April 4 gig at the Nashville [Time Machine, MOJO 258] headlined by The 101'ers with the Sex Pistols as support. I lived nearby and was always in there, seeing so much (including a very amiable Bob Marley in attendance for a Rico show, when the news was he'd been shot in Jamaica and might be dead). I was friendly with Strummer (who at that time was into Commander Cody/Lost Planet Airmen) and this was his biggest gig ever. After seeing the Pistols, Strummer did an on-stage destruction of his band. It was amazing, and has stayed in mind ever since.
T. Hulme, Manchester

A mutual and far away respect

David Johansen [MOJO 256] looks and sounds better than ever, and comes across as a slightly bemused soul survivor, comfortable with his legacy and enjoying the present. A CD of David's New York scene would have been the perfect complement.
Julian Malone, Carbondale, Il

Restored to grace

I just read Stuart Murdoch's Self Portrait feature [MOJO 255] and had immediately to tell you that his answer to "I'd like to be remembered…" was the greatest ever. Absolutely wonderful. Brilliant!
Kenneth Higney, New Jersey

The best group ever

It was with a great sense of an era closing that I learned of Daevid Allen's final voyage to Planet Gong [MOJO 258]. I bet he's giggling even now. How about a nice piece on the history and mystery of a remarkable man, musician, poet, artist and activist, among many other things? Many bands, spin-offs and inspirations. He leaves a huge legacy.
Alistair Campbell, via e-mail

I heed the master's call

The MOJO 257 cover feature on *Physical Graffiti* has left a grumpy feeling. At best it was a cosy chat of little substance, at worst a turgid hagiography with Saint Jimmy allowed to mumble his way out of explaining his Crowley fixation. Mr Page may be happy to spend his days shilling endless Zep reissues, but to appear in the planet's greatest music magazine the bar must be set far higher. MOJO is doing Jimmy a favour by granting him access to your readers.
James Gimpeau, Belgrade

I remember it all so well

Re: Sonic Youth [MOJO 257]. Years ago Rolling Stone asked Neil Young why he played with Crazy Horse and not superior musicians. Neil replied something like, "Being good was never part of our plan." Sonic Youth opened for Neil in 1991 and were just awful. My friend Sam said, "Neil hired them so we wouldn't notice how bad he is." The third band on the bill was Social Distortion, and they blew the doors off the joint.
Terry Truman, Colorado, USA

Criminals to catch

In your MOJO4music.com piece [referencing the Kurt Cobain Eyewitness, MOJO 253] you say "he took his own life". I am so sick of seeing this reported. He didn't take his own life. Read Tom Grant's Kurt Cobain Murder Investigation Case Study Manual. If it doesn't lay out the case for murder, then you are just dumb. Dismissing the whole murder conspiracy is just laziness based on listening to other people say it's just a conspiracy theory. That's bullshit. Anyone with a brain can see that someone had him killed – or, at the very least, someone tampered with his body and shot him to make it look like he killed himself. The more people who get educated on this the better.
Jay, via e-mail

What have we done?

Re: Dylan's 20 Greatest Covers [MOJO 256]. Gene Clark did indeed record Ian & Sylvia's The French Girl but it wasn't on his album with the Gosdin Brothers. It was recorded, together with Gene's own Only Colombe, and intended for a 45 release but was nixed by Columbia's A&R staff. Both songs, albeit edited on Gene's request, first surfaced on the 1991 *Echoes* compilation, and the originals were added to the 2007 Sundazed re-release of *Gene Clark With The Gosdin Brothers* as bonus tracks.
Martin Bobbe, The Netherlands

The biggest names in the music business

Have you given thought to doing features on either Michael Des Barres, Lightning Bolt, Budgie, Bill Laswell, the Soul Jazz label, Steeplechase, Montrose, or finally (quite possibly asking way too much) Quiet Riot? Please continue to be awesome.
Jack Smith, via e-mail

The kids seem to like it

I am collating a book of people's memories of seeing The Rolling Stones in the 1960s. The Stones played nearly 1,000 shows in this era (over 300 in both 1963 and 1964), and I'd love to hear from anyone who saw them with Brian Jones. I can be contacted at richardmhoughton@gmail.com.
Richard Houghton, Preston

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WHAT GOES

EQUINEINTERVENTION

YEAR OF THE HORSE

To celebrate its 40th anniversary, Patti Smith tours her 1975 debut. Plus, John Cale plays *The Velvet Underground And Nico* live!

Coming in, in all directions: (clockwise from main) a Robert Mapplethorpe portrait of Patti Smith in New York, 1975; Smith and John Cale live at the Fondation Cartier, October 23, 2014; the *Horses* album sleeve; Smith in concert with drummer Jay Dee Daugherty.

Getty Images (3)

Patti Smith initially mooted shows to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her debut album *Horses* last October, when she confirmed the mythic work would be performed in its entirety at dates in London, Paris and New York in 2015 – the latter engagement to coincide with the LP's November 10, 1975 release date. A tour of Europe has now been announced, running from late May to August, with concerts in Manchester and Glasgow joining one at east London's Field Day fest on June 7.

The capital is clearly a special place for Smith as far as *Horses* is concerned. The city, she recalled, "pretty much broke" the album when The Patti Smith Group played at the Roundhouse in May 1976 to rapturous response, turning a group of US mavericks into serious contenders. As in '76, Smith's band for the anniversary shows will feature Lenny Kaye (guitar) and Jay Dee Daugherty (drums), plus bassist Tony Shanahan.

A unique, poetry-infused 'Rimbaud'n'Roll' marriage alchemised in the white-hot crucible of New York City's '70s underground scene, *Horses* is regularly cited as one of rock's greatest debuts, the record that kick-started punk, preceding The Ramones' debut by five months. Talking to MOJO in early 2005, Smith reflected: "I'm still really proud of *Horses*… I was speaking to the disenfranchised, to the people outside society, people like myself. I think *Horses* did what I hoped it would do."

> "I WAS SPEAKING TO THE DISENFRANCHISED, TO THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE SOCIETY, PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF."

The LP had an indelible effect on dominant forces of the '80s and beyond. Siouxsie Sioux, Courtney Love and P.J. Harvey are among its admirers, but two of the most vocal loyalists have been Michael Stipe and Morrissey. "[*Horses*] tore my limbs off and put them back on in a whole different order," the former remembered. Morrissey, meanwhile, recalled how, "after hearing *Horses*, I was never the same again."

Though Television guitarist Tom Verlaine, who played on *Horses*, appeared at Smith's performance of the album at her 2005 Meltdown show, no guests have been named for the 40th anniversary. But a possibility is serial collaborator John Cale, the *Horses* producer who last appeared with Smith at October 2014's Paris show Reunion, marking the Cartier Foundation's 30th anniversary. After separate sets, the two united to play The Velvet Underground's Sister Ray and Jonathan Richman's Pablo Picasso. In another move to reframe a classic, Cale and friends will bring the *Velvet Underground And Nico* LP to the live stage in Paris next April.

With or without assistance, Smith says she is looking forward to *Horses*' 40th birthday. "I'm going to be happy to celebrate it," she told writer Kory Grow last year, "not with any kind of cynicism or a cashing-in thing. It will be a true, proud celebration."

As MOJO went to press, news also emerged that the artist's second memoir, entitled M Train, will be published on October 6. Illustrated by Smith's black-and-white Polaroids, publishers Knopf reveal that the episodic book will see her moving "between dreams and reality" in Mexico, Berlin, Michigan and beyond, as she reflects on "the writer's craft and on artistic creation."

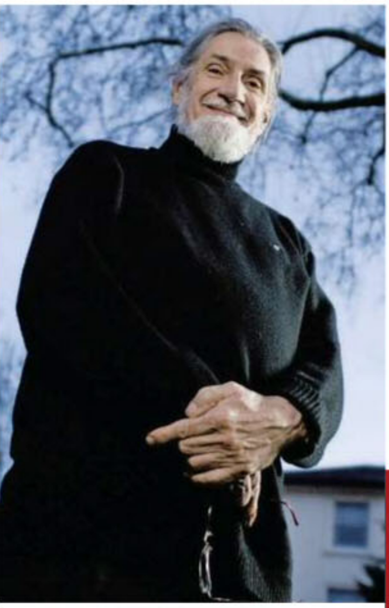
Martin Aston

ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND
BIZARRE STORIES
FROM PLANET **MOJO**

Remembering Mountains
Unheard Songs by Karen Dalton

Royal Dalton: (anti-clockwise from main) Karen watches the river roll by; the sleeve of *Remembering Mountains;* friend and curator Pete Walker; interpreter Sharon Van Etten; (bottom) Tara Jane O'Neil.



FOLKREVIVAL

IN HER OWN TIME

Unrecorded songs by Karen Dalton – Dylan's favourite singer – cut by a dream roster of US female vocalists.

Pete Walker first met Karen Dalton in the early '60s in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the home of Cambridge/Boston folk singer-songwriter John Morier. Karen arrived with her husband/musical partner Richard Tucker, remembers the 77-year-old folk guitarist. "Slick, professional, they had their act together. I very was impressed."

Dalton, raised in rural Oklahoma, quickly established a name for herself on the Greenwich Village folk scene, thanks largely to her plangent picking style and remarkable voice, which Walker likens to "a muted breaking trumpet". Bob Dylan famously said she sang in "a voice like Billie Holiday's and played the guitar like Jimmy Reed".

But Dalton's recording career was short-lived. She cut two albums of covers between 1969 and 1971, but illness, addiction and stage fright put paid to plans to record her own songs.

Walker remained Dalton's friend through years of mutual poverty. In 1988 she was unwell with the HIV-related illness that eventually killed her. "We were talking about her estate, and what she wanted to do," says Walker. "She didn't have any physical property. She'd sold her two guitars to me, her two banjos [went to] Japanese collectors. That left her 'intellectual property rights'."

Those rights amounted to lyrics Walker published as Karen Dalton's Songs And Writings in 2012. "They tell the story of her musical life," he explains. "They include the mainstream of American music, historic and contemporary. Karen was a genuine 'Root Source'."

One person struck by the power of Dalton's writings was Josh Rosenthal of US roots label, Tompkins Square. "Josh came over to my house a few years ago and was going through the material on Karen I was preparing," Walker goes on. "He wanted to be part of the rediscovery and recognition of Karen, and had the idea to present the songs to various singers."

> "IT'S LIKE ENTERING INTO A TRUST WITH SOMEONE YOU HAVE NEVER MET… KINDA HEAVY, BUT ALSO JOYFUL."
> **Tara Jane O'Neil**

The result, *Remembering Mountains*, unites Dalton's unrecorded self-penned works with 11 modern female singers whose voices, aesthetics and world-views owe something significant to this 'Root Source'. They include MOJO favourites such as Sharon Van Etten, Julia Holter, Lucinda Williams, Isobel Campbell and Tara Jane O'Neil.

"Josh sent me the writings Pete Walker had collected," says O'Neil, who first heard Dalton in the late '90s. "Cracking into that collection felt like a sacred experience. Convening with her spirit while reading of her inner world was really heavy… (it) was a real gift and responsibility."

O'Neil covers a wistful lyric titled At Last The Night Has Ended. As with many of Dalton's writings, much of the text wasn't in song form or metre. "I kind of let the song show itself to me," O'Neil explains. "It's like entering into a trust with someone you have never met, continuing to keep their light aflame. Yeah, kinda heavy, but also joyful."

"I [once] mentioned the possibility of fame after [Karen] was gone," says Walker. "Her reply, 'It won't make any difference to me, Peter, 'cos I won't be here to enjoy it! I'll be dead.' That was the day she cried."

"I feel a certain sadness she never got to record these songs," admits O'Neil. "There is a shade of melancholy to them, but there is deep love, little romantic details, a truth seeking. 'A symphony of gladness I'm trying to compose', is a lyric from the song I did, and that's a beautiful way to say it."

Andrew Male

Remembering Mountains: Unheard Songs By Karen Dalton is out on Tompkins Square on May 26.

MOJO DIARY

MAY 12

Bobby Hart's (above) autobiography, titled Psychedelic Bubble Gum: Boyce & Hart, The Monkees, And Turning Mayhem Into Miracles, is published. Including his thoughts on the songwriting partnership with **Tommy Boyce** that yielded hits for **The Monkees** and others, it features a foreword from **Micky Dolenz**. It also promises hard won wisdom on "surviving and thriving after a highly public career collapse".

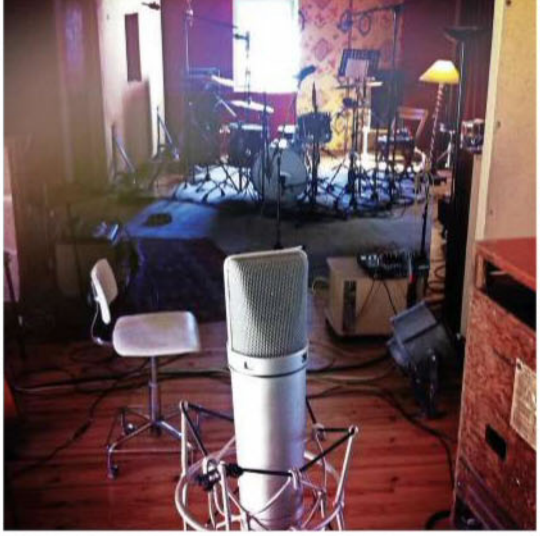
MAY 18

More Than A Witness; 30 Years Of Punk Politics In Action gets its UK DVD release. **Robin Bell**'s documentary on the Washington DC punk scene and its sense of social responsibility, entertainment and insight comes via vintage footage of bands including Bikini Kill and Fugazi with comment from Jello Biafra (above), Crass, Dave Grohl and others.

MAY 24

Dave McCabe (above) of **The Zutons** has founded new group **The Ramifications** and abandoned trad-minded guitar rock for synthesizers, silver face paint and roboid whimsy. He reveals his fresh direction more fully at Liverpool Sound City's Cargo Stage, and also plays London's Electrowerkz on May 20 and the Manchester Deaf Institute on May 23.

Courtesy of Elliott Landy (www.langyvision.com), Getty Images (2), Alamy, James Kidd



MOJOWORKING

TEENAGE FANCLUB

Bellshill's aces of mellow go to France for album number 10, and some fine wines.

"Environment definitely affects the way your records sound," says Teenage Fanclub's Norman Blake of the band's decision to record their forthcoming LP in a residential studio in Provence, France. "We were in the foothills of Mount Ventoux, and would wake up in the morning and have a coffee, the Mistral blowing down from the north occasionally. It was a beautiful place."

It says much about the Glaswegian quartet's unhurried approach that the month-long session at Vega studios near Carpentras, where most of the backing tracks were nailed, took place two years ago, in May 2013. The album – their tenth – follows 2010's *Shadows*, itself another half-a-decade-in-the-making LP after 2005's *Man-Made*.

The group's leisurely modus operandi might partly be explained by Blake's move several years ago to Canada, but regular communication via e-mail with the other members in Glasgow means, Blake says, "that in reality nothing much has changed. We've only ever got together to tour and record."

The group found Vega studios via the internet, intrigued by its late-'60s EMI TG 12345 solid-state desk from Pathé Marconi in Paris – one on which The Rolling Stones recorded *Some Girls*. At Vega, the music flowed with characteristic ease, with the group's three songwriters – Blake, guitarist Raymond McGinley and bassist Gerard Love – taking it in turns to present their songs.

Mistral weeks: TFC take their time in Provence (clockwise from top left) Gerard Love; mike awaits; Love at the mixing desk; Raymond McGinley; Norman Blake; Francis Macdonald's drums.

Although the group's musical tastes are eclectic, Blake suspects the album will be a customarily "laidback and mellow" TFC offering, but with "lots of different textures and sounds".

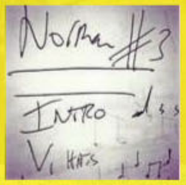
"Some of Gerry's things are light and pretty soulful, and there are sounds inspired by Stereolab albums and Can, harmonies we've heard on a Northern soul record. We all like The Byrds, Big Star and The Beatles, of course. There's a bossa nova song on it that I've written. But I can't say what the finished record will be like until the mixes are done."

Francis Macdonald – their original drummer who left in 1990 and re-joined for *Man-Made* – is the 'new boy', back 12 years now. Sessions took place from mid-morning to 6.30pm, after which a percussionist friend would cook the group "simple but amazing" local fare. Then out came the cheese and red wine – "three euros a bottle, it was all great!"

Back from France, the group overdubbed at McGinley's home studio, and were due to mix the LP there in mid March, ready for a September release on TFC's PeMa label. "Yes, it has felt a bit like a nice holiday," says Blake. "But why not?"

Pat Gilbert

> **"IT FELT LIKE A BIT OF A NICE HOLIDAY, BUT WHY NOT?"**


Norman #3
INTRO
V, HATS

FACT SHEET

Title: TBC
Due: September 2015
Producer: TFC
Songs: The Darkest Part Of The Night / Live In The Moment / I'm In Love
The buzz: "We never have finished lyrics or arrangements when we start. We'll tweak a song for a couple of hours then record some takes. It's intuitive, there's a trust between us that it will always turn out OK." *Norman Blake*

ALSOWORKING

…**ANTONY HEGARTY** has given word of his next LP, saying, "my new album is co-produced by myself, **Oneohtrix Point Never** and **Hudson Mohawke**. It's an electronic record with some sharp teeth. We are mixing it now. It's called HOPELESSNESS. My name for this project is ANOHNI". At press time his label had no idea when it would be out, though… **LORDE** (right) has started work on her new LP with producer **Richard Kingsmill**… **DAVID GILMOUR** will release his fourth solo LP in September, to coincide with live dates in the UK and Europe… **ROOTS MANUVA** (left) is working on his first new album since 2011's *4everevolution*. On mixing desk duties, **Adrian Sherwood**, who adds, "we've just finished an album with the **Clinic** boys too, which is really good"… **SOUNDGARDEN** are threatening to release a new LP in 2016. Guitarist **Kim Thayil** told the Sydney Morning Herald that frontman **Chris Cornell**, "is very prolific but not all his material is Soundgarden-worthy… his songs don't always strike us as something we like for the band" … **THE LIBERTINES**' new album saga rolls on they are due in the studio this month, after **Pete Doherty** and **Carl Barât** held writing sessions in Thailand in January and February… **TAME IMPALA**'s third album, entitled *Currents*, edged closer with the online release of disco-pop-rock epic Let It Happen and this month's new single 'Cause I'm A Man. Band-brain **Kevin Parker** recorded and produced the tracks in his studio bunker in Fremantle, Australia…

Rex

La Guerre, shouting: (top) Laetitia Sadier (left) and beat-maker Adrian Younge; (below) Robert Smith, co-vocalist with Paul Hartnoll's 8:58.

MOJO PLAYLIST

Roll back the carpets, the month's best neo-disco, psych-soul and Appalachian balladry are calling.

ADRIAN YOUNGE FT. LAETITIA SADIER

MEMORIES OF WAR

Rap producer Younge, who's previously brought his expertise to works by Jay-Z and Ghostface Killah and who runs LA's haircutting/vinyl hang-out The Artform Studio, cannot escape the gravitational pull of vintage soul and funk on the psychedelic side. This taster from his new album *Los Angeles* suggests it's an obsession all can enjoy. Subtly combining hip hop beats with French pop, retro-Euro cinema sounds and a harpsichord, the pained but elegant Memories Of War also finds former Stereolab voice Sadier bringing just the right balance of candour and lamentation to an account of the traumatised victims of conflict.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

2 **JAMIE XX** GIRL

From the xx man's solo debut, a slowed down, heat-hazed love song to "the most beautiful girl in Hackney", utilising a sample from Freeez's 1983 hit I.O.U. Transporting – but to where?
Find It: *jamiexx.com*

3 **CHIC FEAT. NILE RODGERS** I'LL BE THERE

With the assurance of a man who knows he was right all along, Rodgers brings a slice of prime Chic uplift, slightly filtered and housed-up but true to the Studio 54 roots. "Every night was a blast," it reflects of his legacy. "I don't want to live in the past/But it's a nice place to visit."
Find It: *YouTube*

4 **THE PRE-NEW** PHOTOGRAPHED

Ex-Earl Brutus situationist estate agents employ Sheffield synth muckiness with a dance beat to disdain selfies and other social media age pathologies. Taken from new album *The Male Eunuch*, it includes voice by Romi Sanderson, ex-of The Gun Club.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

5 **8:58** PLEASE (FT. ROBERT SMITH AND LIANNE HALL)

Where ex-Orbital man Paul Hartnoll enlists The Cure's guiding mind and Brighton folk voice to duet in a somewhat unbalanced song of mutual desperation. Electronic but not unfeeling, with all bleeps in the right places.
Find It: *YouTube*

6 **OSCAR** DAFFODIL DAYS

Bittersweet, Smithsy gloom from young north Londoner Oscar as he plies his own chocolatey rich baritone and wry, lyrical miserablism in the service of navel contemplation and ultimately, jangly guitar-pop redemption.
Find It: *YouTube*

> "SMITH DUETS ON A SONG OF MUTUAL DESPERATION."

ROKSAN MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

Photoshot

7 **MICHAEL HEAD AND THE STRANDS** IT'S HARVEST TIME (BAND VERSION)

From *The Olde World*, a new set of recordings from '97, this is a different take from *The Magical World Of The Strands* album. But Mick Head's folk-pop dream of the agrarian shines thrillingly through.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

8 **SYSTEM 7/MIRROR SYSTEM** CHIC PSYCHEDELIC (X-PORT VERSION)

Relentless 4/4 cerebral workout taken from mini-album N+X, where Steve Hillage and Miquette Giraudy's techno and ambient projects meet, fruitfully.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

9 **ROOTS MANUVA** FACETY 2:11

A rhythmically pulsing, quirked-out demand for good manners produced by Four Tet, this glows with pleasing confusion and, due to the repetition of the words "boat race" throughout, it goads as well.
Find It: *YouTube*

10 **NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS** LOIN DES HOMMES/FAR FROM MEN (OST)

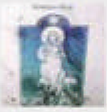
Soundtracking crime and punishment in the Atlas mountains, a mournful, ominous acoustic theme for impending doom.
Find It: *YouTube*

11 **MARTIN GORE** EUROPA HYMN

From the Depeche Mode man's new solo "joint" *MG*, a slowly unfolding, pained synth-classical paean to the European Project (possibly).
Find It: *SoundCloud*

12 **SAINT ETIENNE** YOU DON'T OWN ME/ AFTER THE RAIN

A near-13 minute piece recorded for the Kenzo fashion label, the first half denounces with Numanoid muscularity, while the second reprises '91's Nothing Can Stop Us, via the French discotheque.
Find It: *YouTube*



13 **ROBERT WYATT AND BORIS GREBENSHIKOV** STELLA MARIS

He'd retired, but here Wyatt lends his voice and morose, Chet Baker-in-the-rain trumpet to Russian rock veteran Grebenshikov's folk art/spiritual lament.
Find It: *iTunes*

14 **DAPHNE AND CELESTE** YOU AND I ALONE

Troll-pop duo that did Ooh Stick You in '99 return with a near-perky pop song as guilty memory, produced by Max Tundra.
Find It: *YouTube*

15 **THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR

Nico's least-inhuman moment, over in little more than two lovely minutes. Listen to it while perusing The Velvet Underground Map Of New York, a VU NY reckoner available from herblester.com.
Find It: *YouTube*

STAYING IN THE SHADOW

16 **WOLFGANG FLÜR & JACK DANGERS** STAYING IN THE SHADOW

Kraftwerk/Meat Beat Manifesto men keep it sinister with Bauhaus-techno/personality obliteration ditty.
Find It: *mojo4music*

17 **BITCHIN BONNIE BILLY BAJAS** PRETTY SARO

Marrying Will Oldham's unmoored voice to the stoic drones of Bitchin Bajas's Cooper Crain, this Appalachian ballad from Shirley Collins' 1959 LP is from forthcoming tribute *Shirley Inspired*.
Find It: *mojo4music*

19 **MANTRONIX** BASSLINE (INSTRUMENTAL)

Mind scrambling NY electro from '85. This version's on blue wax via the Get On Down label.
Find It: *YouTube*

18 **HAWKWIND** MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

From 1973's *Space Ritual Alive*, a gnarly plunge into infinity. On the *This Is Your Captain Speaking… Your Captain Is Dead* box.
Find It: *YouTube*

20 **THE VIOLET HUM** FLAWLESS

Recorded live, this London-based four-piece's rumination on distance, remorse and the question "how could I be so cruel?" is agonised and haunting. Drum-free, but boasts piano, close harmonies and Gilmour-like guitars.
Find It: *Vimeo*

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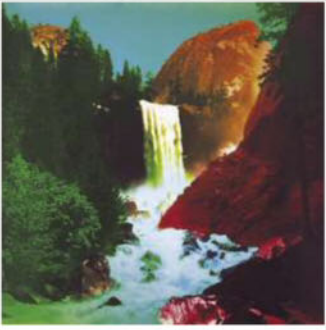

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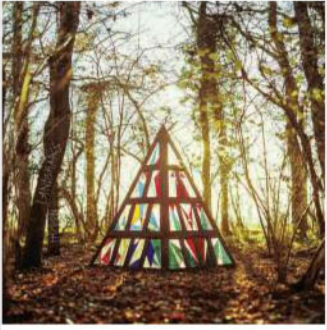

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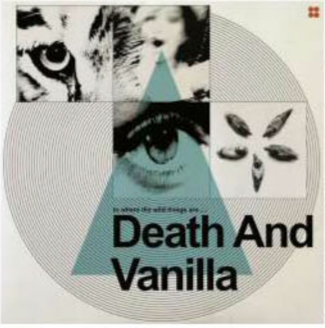
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Twins peak: Naomi (right) and Lisa-Kaindé Diaz experience the dizygotic connection.

Flavien Prioreau

MOJORISING

IBEYI

French-Cuban twins with West African roots sing songs to the dead.

If there is one thing reading children's literature teaches us, it is that every set of twins consists of one who is pure, and one who is pure evil. Put this to 20-year-olds Naomi and Lisa-Kaindé Diaz, and the French-Cuban duo behind *Ibeyi*, their haunting, atmospheric self-titled debut, clam up. For a second…

"I'm the evil one," says Naomi, the elder sister by two minutes. She reconsiders, "No, I'm more crazy. She is reflective, I'm sensitive. We are not identical twins at all, but maybe that is why *Ibeyi* is like it is, because it is two worlds and two minds. We fight all the time, but never over music."

"It's like working your opposite," adds Lisa-Kaindé, who does most of the composing and much of the talking, too. "I'm all about melody, she is rhythm. She's in the future, always on the internet searching out new singers and new types of music, and I'm in the past. We can surprise each other but at the same time we always know where the other one wants to take a song. There is this connection. That's what 'ibeyi' means."

Raised in France by their Venezuelan mother, the twins were packed off to Cuba every year to keep in touch with their father, Anga Diaz, a *conguero* with Buena Vista Social Club. Their upbringing meant they were steeped not just in music but in the West African Yoruba heritage ('ibeyi' is the Yoruba word for twins) carried across the Atlantic on slave ships.

Released earlier this year, *Ibeyi* is not your run-of-the-mill pop album – this is heavy stuff that takes strength from the deaths of both their father and elder sister: the twins sing in both English and Yoruba, play instruments that conjure up the ambience of Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies, and sing songs that invoke the Orishas of Santería.

"We just fell in love with that [Afro-Cuban] culture," says Lisa-Kaindé. "It was us, it defines us. When we started singing in the Yoruba choir we both fell in love with the chants and started learning them, it was definitely a part of us."

XL label owner and producer Richard Russell heard the twins singing together on YouTube and signed them; they instantly felt he was like an undiscovered third triplet. "A lot of producers who see two 18-year-old girls will say, 'I know better than you,'" says Lisa-Kaindé. "He never did that. I wanted to do something organic and minimalist, my sister wanted electronic sounds and hip hop influences. He just said, 'Right, you should do that.'"

"He let us do what we wanted but he helped us a lot," adds Naomi. "Recording the album was four months of joy."

Two heads, it would seem, are better than one.

David Hutcheon

> "WE ARE NOT IDENTICAL TWINS; IT'S TWO WORLDS AND TWO MINDS."

FACT SHEET

- The Yoruba are an ethnic group based mainly in Nigeria, with branches in Cuba and Brazil from the Atlantic slave trade.
- The sisters' father, Miguel 'Anga' Díaz, who died in 2006, played percussion with the Buena Vista Social Club and Afro-Cuban Allstars.
- Opening track references Eleggua, the Orisha (spirits) representing the crossroads of opportunity in the Afro-Cuban religion Santería.

KEY TRACKS

- River
- Think Of You
- Yanira

MINDBLOWERS!

COLIN NEWMAN

Wire's creative master socket and sonic trekker gets literal about his personal irreversible synaptic-detonations.

Interview by Pat Gilbert

LOGICAL PROGRESSION

1 LTJ BUKEM/ VARIOUS
LOGICAL PROGRESSION

(Good Looking album, 1996)

"Disc 1 only. The thing about that early drum'n'bass era was it was all about 12-inches rather than albums. With the compilation, you could tape it and listen in the car – interesting, because even though it has cosmic overtones, this music is also the sound of the English countryside. [Wife] Malka and I used to go to Bukem's club, Speed. It was a moment in time. When we moved to London in 1992, I found myself listening to pirate radio. We didn't have it in Brussels, it was more a techno scene. I found the drum'n'bass hardcore fascinating, I felt it was outsiders' music. I like a good beat and something that's danceable. I'm quite a good dancer!"

NICE ENOUGH TO EAT

2 VARIOUS
NICE ENOUGH TO EAT

(Island album, 1969)

"This was Island's second label sampler, and the first album me and my mates bought, because it was cheap [15 shillings and sixpence]. 1969 was still early in the history of the [rock] album. The Beatles had created a template for LPs to be out-there – *The White Album* had the Vera Lynn-style Goodnight, to Helter Skelter. So this seemed in keeping with that. King Crimson's 21st Century Schizoid Man was the deepest prog you could get, a totally relentless piece of music. By contrast, there was Time Has Told Me by Nick Drake. It was strange when he became so referenced later, because in the '70s you rarely met anyone who'd ever heard of him. Mind-blowing as an introduction to 'album' music."

JOHN MARTYN solid air

3 JOHN MARTYN
SOLID AIR

(Island album, 1973)

"This seemed like the most stoned record ever, though I found out later it was booze behind it. It's so laid-back. The space between the notes is so big. When you were sitting around as students, with people getting out of it, the air felt thick and this record defines that – 'solid air' is such a great description. English folk music could be twee, but John Martyn was expanding it, making it cosmic. People didn't get it, but I did and I turned a lot of people on to it. When I met John at the 2008 MOJO Awards, I told him that and he said, 'So it's all your fault, is it?'"

STEVE REICH
Music for 18 Musicians

4 STEVE REICH
MUSIC FOR 18 MUSICIANS

(ECM album, 1978)

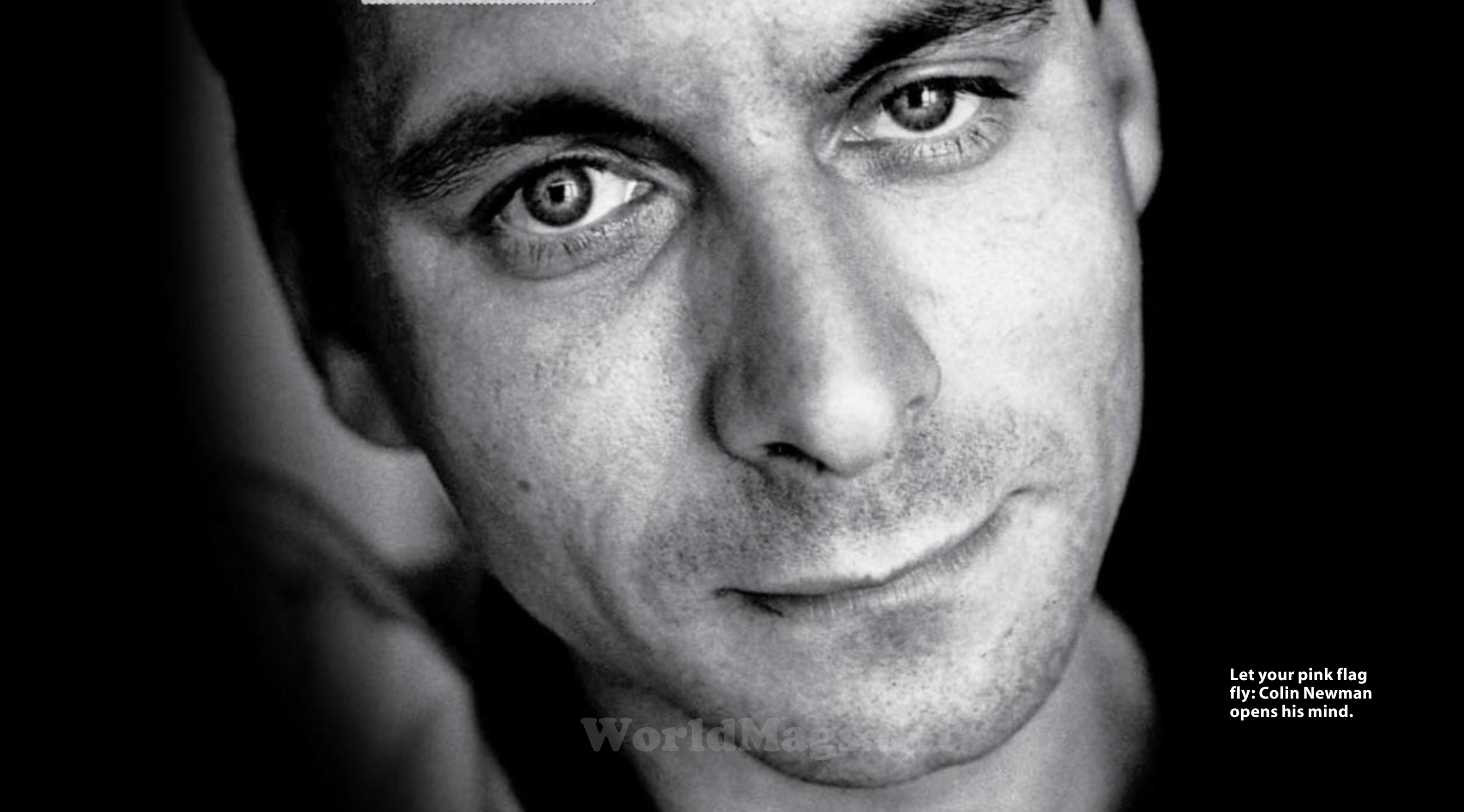
"This is literally mind-blowing, the way he managed to achieve this. On my first day at art college, my tutor played us some music by Steve Reich. I was fascinated – my diet of music came from reading the music press and listening to music with mates, I'd never been exposed to contemporary classical music. *Music For 18 Musicians* must be fiendishly difficult to perform, to defeat your natural inclination to play with the other people. I love its repetition. Once again, it's quite cosmic, it's like lying on your back and watching the night's sky."

5 TODD RUNDGREN
A WIZARD, A TRUE STAR

(Bearsville album, 1973)

"When I was at college, I went into town in Winchester and they were having a sale. I bought two records cheap that day – *Wizard…* because I'd previously heard I Saw The Light, a great Beatles pastiche, and Steely Dan's *Countdown To Ecstasy*. Those two records stayed with me for years and were big influences. I put on *A Wizard…*, and thought, What the fuck is this?, it went from going 'Gggrr gggr' (*mimics International Feel's electronic intro*) to something from The Wizard Of Oz. It has a quality of someone who doesn't take themselves entirely seriously and is way more talented than is useful. I thought it was brilliant. He was amazingly slapdash in his approach to everything, and all his work methods were totally wrong. He'd record the bass before the drums. This record very much defined who I became."

Wire by Wire is out now on Pinkflag



Let your pink flag fly: Colin Newman opens his mind.

WorldMags

ROCK'N'ROLL CONFIDENTIAL

KAT BJELLAND

Babes In Toyland's feral screamer on reunions, freakouts and Flying Vs.

"I mean, how hard is it to play these songs?" laughs Kat Bjelland, from the Minneapolis rehearsal space where the reformed Babes In Toyland are preparing for a series of live dates across the globe. The Minnesota trio's brutal blend of Cro-Magnon riffage and Bjelland's napalm-gargling siren wail delivered some of the most electrifying punk rock of the '90s, across three uncompromising albums (1990's *Spanking Machine*, '92's masterful *Fontanelle* and '95's *Nemesisters*). Babes ran aground early in the noughties, with Bjelland focusing on parenthood and her Katastrophy Wife project, but 2015 will see them undertake their first live shows in almost 14 years. An unexpected reunion, she says it's been sparked in part by a new generation of admirers who never saw them first time around. "We kinda feel obligated to play for them," grins Bjelland. "And it's just playing music, which is fun, right?"

What were the circumstances behind the reunion?

Our bass player, Maureen Herman, invited me to her lake house in Wisconsin. We hadn't talked in a long time, and suddenly she said, "I want to play again, do you?" And I was like, "Yeah, me too!" We called Lori [Barbero, drummer] straightaway. We all got together, to see if we all still got along, and it was just like old times. We started playing, without thinking about it too much, and the words and parts just came back to us. We'd crack up after every song, like "What are we doing??" (*Laughs*) It was great.

GrungeMob ScareRants: Kat Bjelland (centre) flanked by original Babes Michelle Leon (left) and Lori Barbero.

KAT'S KICKS

Bjelland's Top 5 Bangers

1 **The Gun Club** *Jack On Fire* (FROM *FIRE OF LOVE*, RUBY, 1981)

2 **Cell 609** *Re-Pulsions* (STUFF, 1979)

3 **Girlschool** *Emergency* (BRONZE, 1980)

4 **The Staple Singers** *On My Way To Heaven* (VEE-JAY, 1958)

5 **Plasmatics** *Doom Song* (FROM *METAL PRIESTESS*, STIFF AMERICA, 1981)

How does it feel to be singing again?

Well, I did Katastrophy Wife after Babes In Toyland, so I didn't ever stop singing. But my voice is still the same, I didn't lose it. I don't warm up or anything, I just go straight into singing. I probably *should* warm up, but I never did for all those years, so I don't know why I would start now. Where did that voice come from? I had an angry childhood!

What were your earliest forays into making music?

I had loved rock'n'roll since I was a wee little girl, and my uncle, David Higginbotham, gave me a couple of guitar lessons. Just a few. I played in a band with him, The Neurotics. My first boyfriend, Jeff, had a Flying V around the house, and I would pick it up when he was gone. The Flying V felt weird to play, but I'd plug it into a Marshall amp so it always sounded good. I had an acoustic for a little bit, too, but I was like, No, that's not for me! (*Laughs*).

Camera Press

WorldMag

And who were your formative musical heroes?

I really liked Wendy O. Williams, and Chrissie Hynde. I loved The Cramps, the Ramones and the Divinyls. And I saw Girlschool play with Motörhead. I didn't know who they were, and I was blown away. I would love to meet them – they were my heroes.

How did you originally assemble Babes In Toyland?

I like three-pieces, because everyone really has to pull their weight. I purposely looked for people who didn't already know how to play, so they would gel with my self-taught guitar style. Lori hadn't played a lick of drums. We were raw, feral, primal.

You were known for wearing vintage dresses on-stage…

I've always worn vintage clothes, because they're cheaper, and I love them. I used to take old '30s linen dresses and cut them up, modify them. The press called it 'kinder-whore', but I found that to be a quite off-putting name.

What are your memories of playing the Lollapalooza tour in 1993?

The venues were so huge, I prefer smaller shows where you can feel the energy. But it was fun to hang out with all the bands. Things could get a little crazy: you'd be out in the middle of nowhere, bored and partying pretty hard, consuming your riders. Lollapalooza was pretty hard. I would never sleep on the bus, because I was afraid I would die in a bus accident. I was exhausted all the time.

Why did Babes end?

It had just stopped being fun. We'd been together a long time and we wanted to do different things, I'd started a family – I have a son, Henry, he's 15-and-a-half now. It just seemed like the time to stop.

Have you been surprised by the response to your reformation?

Yes! We played the Roxy in February, Lydia Lunch and Exene Cervenka from X, two artists I really respect, both came to the show. It was nerve-wracking, performing before them. And the tickets for the show had sold out in a couple of minutes, which freaked me out even more.

Will there be any new Babes music?

It's a possibility. Right now, I just want to concentrate on playing these shows. So… maybe.

Tell me something you've never told a journalist before.

"Fuck off!" And there were plenty of times I wanted to, believe me, dealing with interviewers who didn't know our music and hadn't done the proper research, and displayed a repulsive lack of motivation!

Stevie Chick

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

RAEKWON

The Wu-Tang Chef salutes Eric B & Rakim's *Paid In Full.*

It hit me when I was coming up. I was maybe 15, 16. I was listening to a lot of soul music, legends like Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye. It was a great time: I was young, I had a summer youth job in Staten Island, earning $70 a week. I was a janitor, mopping the hallways and taking the garbage out. That was the kind of job they gave us back then.

Listening to rap, I always felt like the music was talking to me. But the first time I heard the *Paid In Full* album on DJ Red Alert's Mastermix show, that was it, I wanted to be a rapper. I fell in love with lyrics and storytelling, and I studied everything, from the credits on the album to the clothes. I Ain't No Joke, Paid In Full, Move The Crowd – a lot of dope shit, and we knew it like the back of our hand. What I took from Rakim was wordplay – it was so sharp, so intellectual. I got a pen and wrote it down. The way he flowed on the beat was like a glass of water. And you got to have the right production – it's like a diamond that's an A-class gem, the simplicity of it is cool. It definitely touched my soul.

That album kind of steered hip hop into being conscious. We come from the bottomless pit, not really having no money, seeing your family struggle. This album gave me a sense of hope, 'cos it's all about survival – where's your direction at? Are you intelligent enough to handle society?

It's funny because even before I ever got in the business I had the opportunity of meeting Rakim – I was going to a club with my friends, and I saw this guy with mad jewellery on leaning against the wall. As I was walking closer, I see, it's him, but I'm lost for words, man, so I just nodded at him. Inside, I was just mingling around, and the next thing you know, it's him – no bodyguards, no nothing – and as he walked by me he put his hand on my shoulder, like it's "What's up kid, how you doing", and he kept it moving. It was like he turned my whole arm to solid gold, it was like meeting fuckin' Prince William to me. Ten years later I had the opportunity to have a show with him, and he said he was a fan of mine, which blew me away.

They call him the God MC – they don't call him that for nothing. He's one of the true pioneers of New York hip hop, my number one MC of all times, and that one year, Eric B and Rakim took over.

As told to Ian Harrison

Raekwon's Fly International Luxurious Art is out on April 27

This was Raekwon's earliest scrape: The Chef (below), in awe of *Paid In Full* (bottom).

"IT WAS LIKE HE TURNED MY WHOLE ARM TO SOLID GOLD."

ERIC B. & RAKIM
PAID IN FULL

MOJORISING

RICHARD DAWSON

Northeast folk re-shaper brings affecting ruination.

Torch me, I'm sick: Richard Dawson gives 'em the old razzle dazzle after re-emerging from chaos.

Richard Dawson has been known to joke that he is "not a solo artist, but all the other people in the group are dead". Watching the lone survivor perform, it's easy to guess what might've killed his notional bandmates. This soft-spoken Tynesider sings songs the way kamikaze pilots flew planes, then stumbles from the wreckage of his own larynx with a self-deprecating wisecrack.

"The thing about what I do", he deadpans, "is that it is for everyone." It's hard to know how best to prepare the as yet uninitiated for their first experience of Dawson's music, but anyone expecting something roughly along the lines of Bob Mortimer hollering a Ted Hughes poem about a fatal equine breach-birth over a vicious guitar battle between John Fahey and System Of A Down is unlikely to be disappointed. The YouTube video for 2014's The Vile Stuff actually makes the perfect introduction to his wracked reconfiguring of British folk's DNA.

The Vile Stuff's darkly hilarious compendium of boozy mishaps is one of two freewheeling 16-minute guitar and vocal narratives which – along with a brace of shorter instrumentals – make up *Nothing Important*, last year's breakthrough (in artistic if not commercial terms) debut for Domino offshoot Weird World. This intense and startlingly original album offered listeners a spookily distended fairground mirror image of that time-honoured new act's calling card, the four-track EP. The fact that Dawson is far from being a new artist is something those freshly hooked on The Vile Stuff tend to be only too happy to discover.

The man himself makes no great claims for 2005's deceptively conventional-sounding first album *Richard Dawson Sings Songs And Plays Guitar*.

"It's the album of somebody who doesn't know what they're doing," he explains, "which can be a good thing, but in this case, I don't think it is."

To say there have been a few twists and turns in the intervening decade would be putting it mildly, but having "disappeared into chaos for a long time – too much drinking and not enough thinking," Dawson only really "seized the reins" with 2011's tender and evocative *The Magic Bridge*.

"I feel like I was finally born at the age of 29", he grimaces, "…better late than never".

Both *The Magic Bridge* and its more austere but no less striking successor *The Glass Trunk* are every bit the equal of *Nothing Important*. And as the coming year's Weird World reissues bring these amazing records to the wider audience they always deserved, Richard Dawson looks set to be acknowledged as the most arresting and essential British artist since… well, there is no 'since'; his is a new mould.

Ben Thompson

Richard Dawson plays the Green Man Festival held in the Brecon Beacons, August 20-23

> "I WAS FINALLY BORN AT THE AGE OF 29 … BETTER LATE THAN NEVER."

RICHARD DAWSON
NOTHING IMPORTANT

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Lal Waterson, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Vic Reeves Big Night Out
- Richard Dawson plays a Baby Taylor guitar which he had specially adapted by a Geordie Buddhist luthier after it got trodden on.

KEY TRACKS

- The Vile Stuff
- Poor Old Horse
- Black Dog In The Sky

ALSORISING

Following the success of her 2013 album *Cerulean Salt*, **WAXAHATCHEE** frontwoman **Katie Crutchfield** felt the effects of fame. "Frustration was brewing," says the Alabama-born singer-songwriter. The result is *Ivy Tripp*, an album full of characters teetering on the edge: turning away from previous influences like the modernist angst of **Rilo Kiley**, Crutchfield looked instead to early **Joni Mitchell**. Eclectic and harder to define, *Ivy Tripp* matches crunchy Belly-ish rockers mixed with quizzical piano ballads. "At the end of the record, I didn't want the feeling of loose ends being tied up," she explains. "I wanted the sadness of the songs to linger." *Priya Elan*

"I remember reading that Aphex Twin used to write songs in his dreams," says **THE TIGERCATS'** **Duncan Barrett**, discussing Wendy & Lisa, a track inspired by the singer's one-time hypnagogic intermingling of **Prince** and himself. "But I've never managed it completely." The track rounds off the London-based five-piece's second album, *Mysteries*, whose delicate, dreamy, old-school analogue indie-pop evokes such as **The Pearlfishers**, **Saint Etienne** and **The Delgadoes**. The promo video to album highlight Sleeping In The Back Seat, sung by Australian co-frontperson **Laura Kovic**, perfectly communicates their alluring oddness: it shows two grown men fighting to the death on a beach. *Pat Gilbert*

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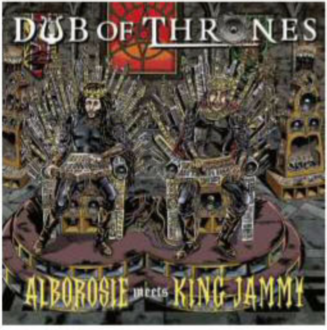
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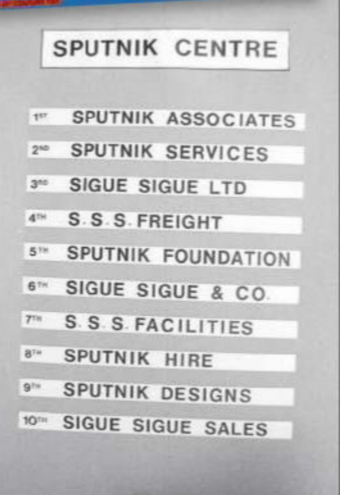
SIGUE ★ SIGUE ★ SPUTNIK
S S S

MOJO EYEWITNESS

SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK SIGN TO EMI FOR '£4MILLION' IN 1985

Punk vet Tony James had steered a gaggle of jammy techno-gonks to fleeting, provocative success. But soon his success-crazed monster was battling a media backlash of extraordinary ferocity and a rain of glass bottles filled with piss. They recall the whole hair-raising affair…

FLAUNT IT
SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK



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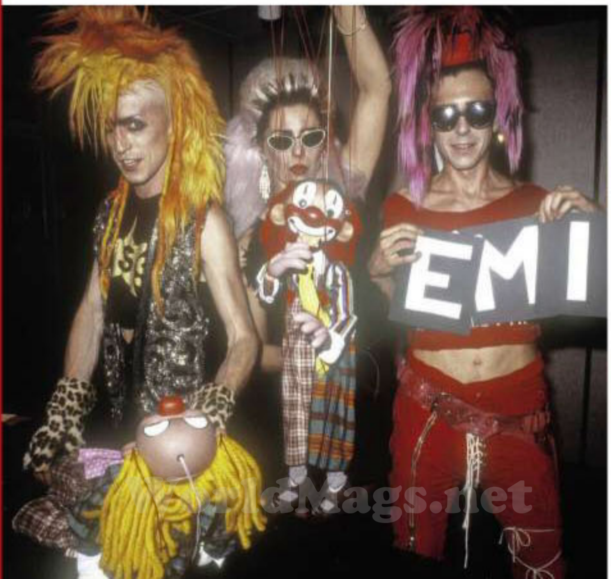
10TH SIGUE SIGUE SALES

"NOBODY HAD CLEARED THE SAMPLES… THAT UNLEASHED ALL FINANCIAL HELL UPON US."



sMags.net

PART 1 "MAD MAX ELECTRO-PUNK"

Sputnik chief Tony James recalls casting in cafes, The Clash's help and press perfidy.

"I came out of Generation X in 1981 like a dazed child. EMI told me, 'Billy Idol's moved to America, it's all over.' I thought, Fuck, I've got to start again. I decided to take everything Malcolm [McLaren] and Bernie [Rhodes] had taught me and put it into something new – a Mad Max vision of electro-punk, combining the music of The Cramps, Suicide and the Stones' Satanic Majesties, and a look based on Clockwork Orange, Blade Runner and The Terminator. I wanted to make this huge monster.

I was back on the dole living with Magenta Devine [music PR, later TV presenter] at Pindock Mews in Sid and Nancy's old flat. I thought from old Cliff Richard films that if you sat in cafes, you'd magically find people. Neal X came first, he loved rock'n'roll and Johnny Thunders. Magenta and I saw Martin Degville singing to an Eddie Cochran record at a shop in Kensington Market. He looked amazing. I thought, If you get people who look like stars, it will grow into something. We saw Ray [Mayhew] in Kensington Market; Chris [Kavanagh] walking down Pindock Mews.

I flew out to see The Clash in America [October 1982], and told the guys to record something when I was away, or else we'll forget about it. They plugged the drum machine into the synthesizer Mick Jones bought us, and set the bpm at 192. It suddenly went 'duh-duh-duh-duh' – it was [first single] Love Missile F1-11! On the same American tour, Mick bought a Roland guitar synth, the 'Dalek's handbag'. I had to play 10 milliseconds ahead of the beat to keep it in sync.

We spent a couple of years refining the sound, learning to play it live and getting some fantastic press in The Face and NME. We looked like aliens from another planet; people were freaked out that the music was so aggressive. Pretty much every senior A&R man was at our first London gig.

I spent 24 hours making a video for our Love Missile demo, then went into every major record company, with pink hair and a suit. We looked and sounded like nothing else, it was consumerist and capitalist, even though the iconography was communist. I was very interested in the idea of the rock star as businessman and advertising mogul. I bought one of those first big mobile phones (*laughs*).

We signed to EMI in November 1985. When we added up the advances over five years it came to two million. [Journalist] Chris Salewicz said, 'How much did you sign for? £4m?' I said, That's great, put that in because in America that's $6m, the Six Million Dollar Band.

The initial advance was a few hundred thousand and we set up this ridiculously huge organisation with offices in the Harrow Road. We recorded the album with Giorgio Moroder – he was a little perplexed the songs all sounded the same (*laughs*). Love Missile F1-11 came out, and the press were all over us – on 36 front covers, selling 60,000 units a day, steaming towards Number 1 all over Europe. I was thinking, I'm a genius! I'd become like the Quatermass monster, growing in power as it absorbed all around it.

When we were filming a video in Ibiza, EMI called me to say the second single wasn't selling. Worse, there were all these film samples on the record – Clockwork Orange, Scarface, Rocky 4 – and nobody had cleared them. Stanley Kubrick heard Love Missile F1-11 in a shop in his local village. I got a call from EMI: 'We do have clearances for these, Tony?' That unleashed all financial hell upon us. When we played live, people thought we were miming. We weren't. At Reading University on the first tour it was like Agincourt, a rain of death came down on us. Ray, who was a volatile person, threw a bottle back and it hit some poor person in the head. I was thinking, This is great, it's so Sid Vicious! Then I'm in the dock, Ray's in jail and the press has turned on us.

We made a second album [1988's *Dress For Excess*], but it wasn't happening. People were bored with it. But it was some ride."

Sigue and ye shall find: the Sputnik men (main, from left) Martin Degville, Chris Kavanagh, Neal X, Ray Mayhew and Tony James; (insets, clockwise from far left) tabloids take aim; the *Flaunt It* album; SSS empire building; playing puppeteers with (centre) Yana Ya Ya; early days with Mick Jones and (bottom) his studio; more EMI mockery; the Love Missile F1-11 single; Tony and his mobile phone.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

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EYES DOWN ON PAGE 5 INSTANT BINGO BONUS

HORROR OF SPUTNIK MANIAC

TIGHT FISTED WHAM!

J.R.'s jokes in bed

SECRET ANGUISH OF MADONNA

Bottle-throwing drummer hit fans

EASTEND GRAN'S TOY BOY

Scope, Urbanimage, Rex (4), sputnikworld.com

TURN OVER! SPUTNIK GUITARIST NEAL X ON A TONE-DEAF SINGER AND RELIEF AS THE GROUP SPLIT...

SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK
21ST CENTURY BOY

PART 2 "THE WHOLE THING WAS A MADHOUSE."

SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK SIGN TO EMI FOR '£4 MILLION', 1985

Guitarist Neal X on the sudden peak, plus drink, drugs and egos.

"I grew up in Kent, and went to college in Brighton. I moved to the big city [in 1982] with dreams of making it, and met Tony through a Melody Maker ad. He had a twinkle in his eye, I felt there was a connection there. The third time I went to his flat, Johnny Thunders came round; Stiv Bators also hung out a lot, Lydia Lunch. We used to play football with The Clash on a Wednesday night. It was hard not to be impressed.

Tony had a vision but he didn't share it all in one go. We went to all the satellite towns around London, sitting in cafes, waiting for Billy Fury to walk through the door. We saw Martin in Kensington Market, he definitely had the look and attitude, so we invited him over to Pindock Mews. We recorded a version of Be-Bop-A-Lula with Martin singing, which was quite painful at the time (*laughs*). It was the first time he'd ever sung. I'm quoted as having said, 'It's terrible!' but Martin convinced us it would get better. And it did – he worked at it, we all did. We were later accused of not being able to play, but we mastered how to create our sound live. We used to play demo mixes in Martin's shop and people would say, 'What's this? It's brilliant.'

Tony went out as the spokesman for the band, and was also the manager, taking care of business. When EMI signed us, the story about getting four million quid was amusing – we got £150K up front. We went from signing on to being on a wage, but it wasn't a lot. We did it all sensibly and set up a company.

Once the record came out, the whole thing was a madhouse. The creative elements in the group were Tony, me and Martin – we did the music, the graphics, the imagery – and the others used to contribute a little bit more to things like getting into fights and thrown out of places. Ray enjoyed a drink, we all did, but he'd turn up for a flight having not been to bed, unable to speak. But none of us had an off-switch in those days – never mind the drink, drugs and egos.

Everyone was saying, 'This is going so well, you'll be a millionaire before the time you're 30.' It was hard to keep your feet on the ground. But no one plans for what happens when the success goes. Love Missile F1-11 was a good song – good enough for Bowie to cover [on the B-side of the New Killer Star single]. But maybe the rest of the album didn't live up to that.

After the bottle-throwing incident at Reading University [on March 1, 1986] we were suddenly on the front page of the papers being Public Enemy Number 1. Every day there would be a story in the papers about us. The violence wasn't cool, it was just thuggery. Tony had been talking about designer violence but we never equated that with people throwing bottles.

When EMI dropped us I felt a sense of relief. An A&R guy said over dinner that if Tony and I wanted to do something new, they'd be interested. Then Tony went off to play with The Sisters Of Mercy. After that, I quickly hooked up with Marc Almond as his guitarist. Ultimately, it has to be about the music and how well that stands up – and I think it does. I've covered Love Missile and Jayne Mansfield on my band The Montecristos' debut album, they're still really great songs."

Pat Gilbert

The Montecristos' Born To Rock'n'Roll is out now on Easy Action.

THE 5th GENERATION OF ROCK & ROLL

Bright lights, big city: (main) James, Degville and X on-stage; (top) second single 21st Century Boy; (below left) Sputnik badge and the 1988 incarnation; (below right) Neal X wonders where it'll end.

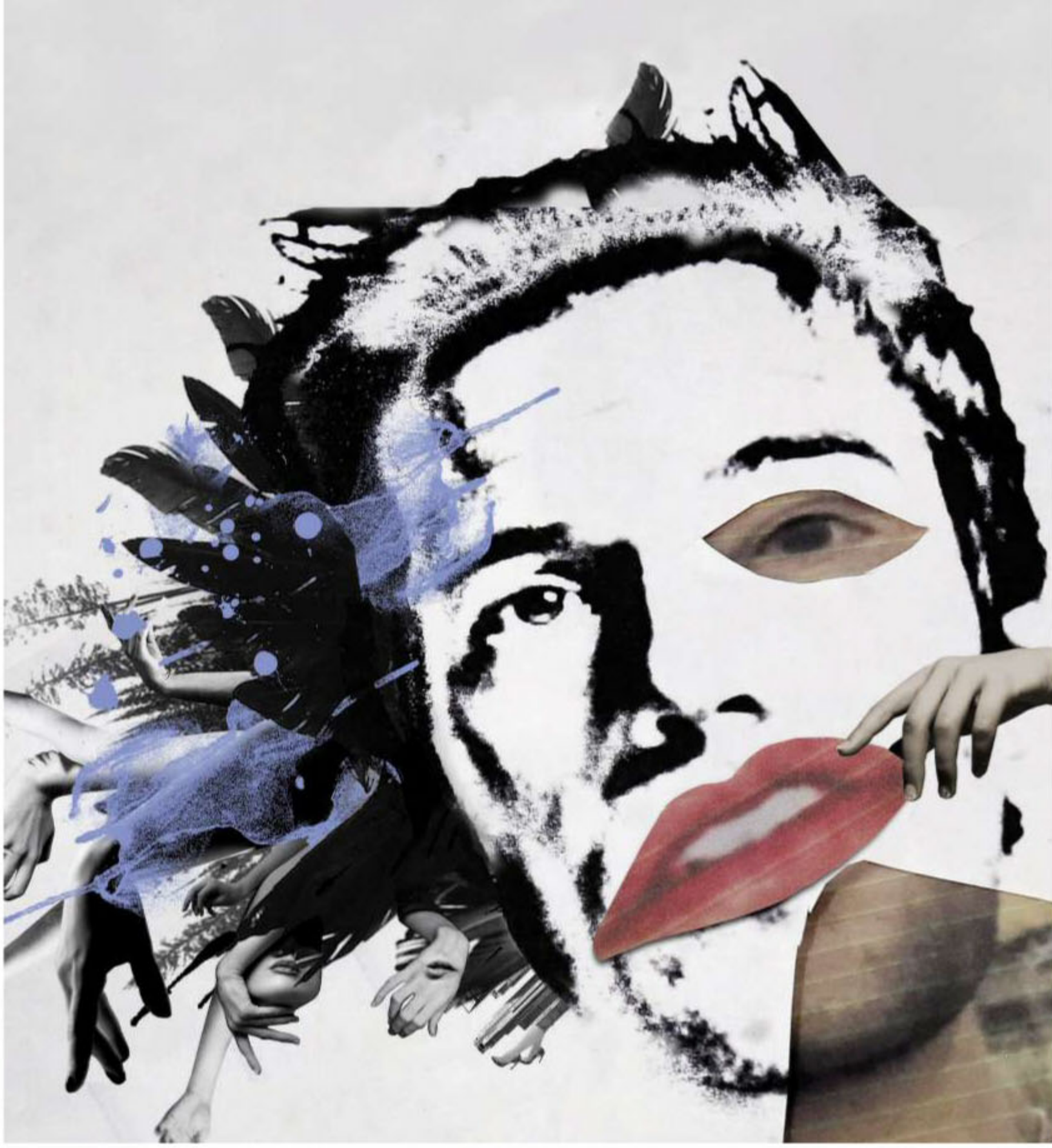
> "EVERYONE WAS SAYING, 'YOU'LL BE A MILLIONAIRE BEFORE YOU'RE 30'..."

Rex, PYMCA< Photoshot

SELFPORTRAIT

BRANDON FLOWERS

The voice of The Killers in his own words and by his own hand.



Lipps Inc: Brandon Flowers by Brandon Flowers.

I would describe myself... reluctantly.

Music changed me... by giving me a way out. At first it was mentally. I got hooked by The Cars when I was 12 or 13. Living in a cowboy town in the middle of nowhere, I loved how listening to them could transport me to some other place. It was like living a double life. Ten years later, music literally gave me a way out. My big goal in life was to get 'juiced in' to a big casino by one of my uncles and park cars for big tips. That was it. But when The Killers blasted off, all that changed.

When I'm not making music... I try to be the best dad I can be to my kids, try to be the best husband I can be to my wife. And maybe get a hike in.

My biggest vice is... well, Las Vegas has no shortage of great Mexican food. But I have a desire for one dish at one particular joint in town that borders on sinful. It's camarones zarandeados at Lindo Michoacan. The shrimp are cooked in some voodoo oil chilli mayo magic magnificence, and I may or may not be guilty of stopping for a plate before returning home from the airport after a long tour.

The last time I felt embarrassed was... Christmas time at a Vegas restaurant with my wife. There were carollers going from table to table singing standard festive tunes. It makes me uncomfortable when they sing to me so I thought I'd shut it down and request All I Want For Christmas Is You by Mariah Carey. No way were they going to know it, much less belt it out at this swanky place. Joke was on me. One of the women in the group knew it and belted it out from top to bottom. I wanted to hide under the table.

My formal qualifications are... piano lessons from age seven to 11. When I was five or six we inherited an upright piano from my great grandma Dixie. Dixie was her showbiz name. Her real name was Melinda. She wrote country songs and actually received royalty cheques from one that ended up being recorded by Mel Tillis. No one else in my family was creative. I owe a lot to that handed-down piano. My mother took me to lessons from around age seven to 11. I still use the fundamental techniques I acquired in those tender years to this day.

"MY BIG GOAL IN LIFE WAS TO GET 'JUICED IN' TO A BIG CASINO..."

The last time I cried was... I cry at church during the hymns all the time.

Vinyl, CD or MP3?... you can't expect everyone to have a record player. CDs aren't so bad. MP3s do the job. I definitely don't define myself by which medium I choose to listen to music.

My most prized possession is... my wife.

The best book I've ever read is... East Of Eden. I'm a Steinbeck man. We read The Pearl in elementary school, that's where he hooked me, but it wasn't until East Of Eden that I fully understood what a master he was. I've never been so immersed in a story before or since. I'd go to bed early because I knew it was waiting on the nightstand. Perfection.

Is the glass half full or half empty... the romantic answer is half full. The truth... half empty.

My biggest regret is... I've been lucky. I don't really have anything looming over my head. However, if the right John Hughes movie comes on I do tend to feel like I missed out on something in high school.

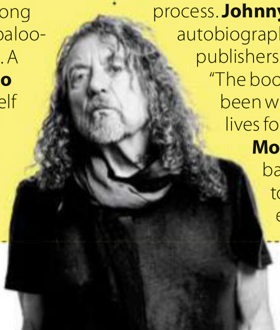
When we die... our spirit moves on and progresses until the resurrection where it will be unified with a perfect body. We will have the opportunity to be with our families and friends.

I'd like to be remembered... as a good man who never gave up.

Brandon Flowers' The Desired Effect is out on May 18

MONDOMOJO

...in a move not remotely likely to frustrate anyone waiting for a **LED ZEPPELIN** reunion, **Robert Plant** (right) sang The Lemon Song with **Jack White** at Lollapalooza Argentina on March 21. A week later producer **Diplo** Instagram'd a pic of himself and Plant with the words "Collab coming soon"... another brace of musical memoirs is approaching. **ELVIS COSTELLO**'s Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink arrives in October and promises to get deep into the songwriting process. **Johnny Marr**'s writing his autobiography too: out in 2016, publishers Century say it's, "The book Smiths' fans have been waiting their whole lives for." Meanwhile, **Morrissey**'s new stage backdrop for his UK tour featured ex-Liverpool and Everton player Johnny Morrissey... rap mogul **RUSSELL SIMMONS** is planning a hip hop Broadway show: "think Love Story meets **Public Enemy**," he says. Will **Flavor Flav** take the **Ali MacGraw** role? ... similarly, **FAITH NO MORE**'s **Roddy Bottum** debuted a version of his **Sasquatch: The Opera** earlier this month in Brooklyn. It's "about a small town family's 'Bigfoot Tours' and the fallout when their daughter runs away with the real Sasquatch," apparently... after stars galore gathered in New York in March to endorse **JAY-Z**'s new streaming service Tidal, **Madonna** (left) felt obliged to answer claims it was another evil ploy by the Illuminati, and defended the possibly imaginary secret society saying, "They changed and shaped the world for the better!"...w



ON THE ROAD

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

In east London, Justin Vernon and The Staves talk their new partnership, Bloody Marys and reignition.

Amid the once-decaying, now-preserved mid-19th century marvel of Wilton's Music Hall in east London, 10 songs into a release day live performance of their stirring second album *If I Was*, Watford's mellifluous sisterly trio The Staves are about to introduce a special guest.

"So we made our album in the wilds of Wisconsin with someone who's come to be such a big friend," announces Camilla Staveley-Taylor, the ukulele-playing youngest of the three. "And we'd like to welcome him to the stage… Justin Vernon.

"Having him on our album," she goes on, smiling cheekily, "you can see how his career has taken a downturn."

There are shocked comedy groans from the crowd, followed by uproarious cheers and applause as the largely missing-in-action leader of Bon Iver shuffles into view, first to harmonise and perform a verse in the hushed incantation of Make It Holy and, later, join in on a suitably lusty encore of Springsteen's I'm On Fire.

Even if made in jest, Camilla Staveley-Taylor's on-stage comment spotlights a certain truth. Four years on from the release of Bon Iver's eponymous second album, there is no sign of – or even plan for – a follow-up. Sitting the next afternoon in the bar at Wilton's, flanked by The Staves, Vernon seems laidback and shruggy about the fact that he's now concentrating on a new life as a record producer and festival organiser (*see panel*).

"My grand plan was to work on anybody's fucking music other than mine for as long as possible," he says. "I was tired." MOJO wonders aloud if Vernon feels the success of Bon Iver perhaps ran away from his more modest ambitions? "I don't even fucking know," he laughs. "In one regard, maybe I was always poised to be like a leader of a band. But there was also times where I really missed having a different role, a supportive role. I think it helps me in the other zone."

He said a couple of years ago that he doesn't really write songs any more. Just sick of the process?

"I just needed to take a big long break, y'know. I think in the last five or six years, I've learned that the real truthful, important, artistically successful albums take a while. Especially with something so dear to me, like my own music, I'm just not in a hurry. I'm just gonna let it come when it comes."

In some ways, at least in sonic terms, the layered and slow-burning *If I Was* can be viewed as the successor to Bon Iver, posits MOJO.

"We've probably reignited his career," mischievously smiles middle Staves sister Jessica. "Because he's probably gone (*uncanny US drawl*), 'One day I can write songs that good, y'know. I'm gonna start trying again.'"

The four hoot as one and you can see why Vernon is wholly attracted to The Staves – possessed of beautifully harmonising voices on record and stage but, as people, given to salty, piss-taking humour. They first met after he was given a copy of their 2011 Mexico EP by their mutual American booking agent. Impressed, he invited them on tour.

"It was just the voices, man," he enthuses. "Y'know, harmony singer-songwriters are a dime a dozen. But it was special. I was like, Fuck, this is great."

Meanwhile, ask The Staves about their initial impressions of Vernon and their responses are immediate and emphatic.

"Oh," says Camilla, "I thought he was a dick."

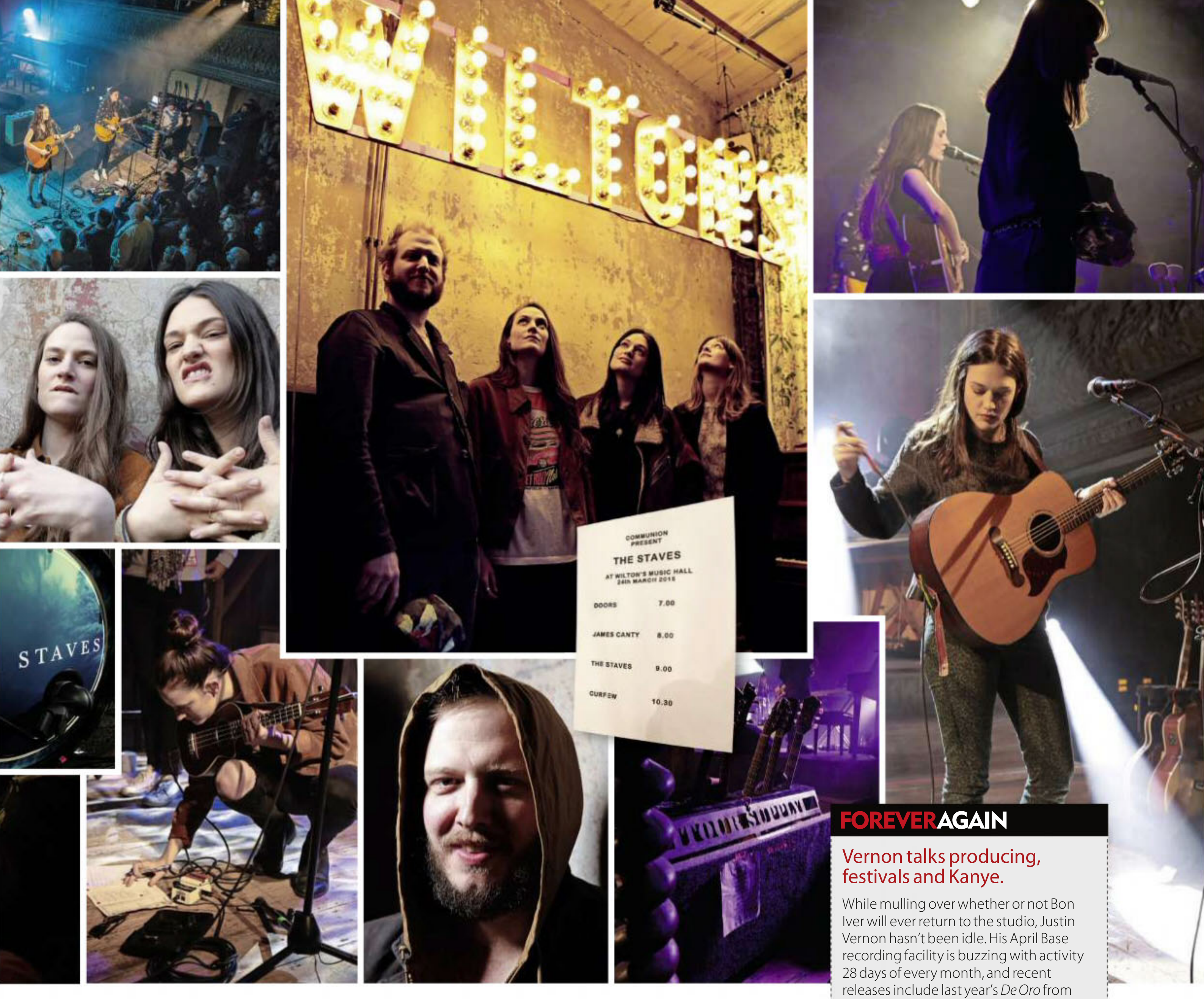
"He's very aggressive," nods Emily. "Very cruel and physical kind of guy."

Such frivolous larking shows how close Vernon and The Staves have become. Road-burned

Bon Iver, here nor there?: (above) on-stage at Wilton's, March 24, 2015 (from left) Emily and Camilla Staveley-Taylor, Justin Vernon, Jessica Staveley-Taylor; (below) outside.

> "MY GRAND PLAN WAS TO WORK ON ANYBODY'S FUCKING MUSIC OTHER THAN MINE."
> Justin Vernon

Andrew Cotterill (12), Rex



Let's Stave together: (clockwise from top left) the Staveley-Taylors on-stage; with Vernon in the venue; Emily (front) and Camilla; Jessica soundchecks; guitars and running order; Vernon gets cowled; Camilla soundchecks; drumskin; The Staves knuckle down; (inset below) Vernon's pal Kanye West.

after incessantly touring their 2012 debut *Dead & Born & Grown*, they first visited his April Base Studio (outside Eau Claire, Wisconsin) in February 2013, following his casual invitation. It was a freeing experience, they say, not least because they started recording there without the knowledge of the people at their label, Atlantic.

In the touring bubble, though travelling together, The Staves had found themselves talking only about their day-to-day career details, without confiding in one another the more testing circumstances of their emotional lives. Reaching April Base, they purged in song.

"There was stuff that the three of us were going through that we didn't even realise about," says Jessica. "Mills [Camilla] would play a song and it was like, Ah so that's where she's at."

"Suddenly you just really need to let everything out," Camilla admits.

As a result, *If I Was* is highly emotive stuff, detailing broken relationships, though not self-pityingly so, as evidenced by rousing opener Blood I Bled and the thumping, multivoiced fuck-you missive of Black & White. "Seeing that willingness to open up," says Vernon, "it made me wanna work really, really hard for it."

However, much fun was also had during the five trips it took to complete *If I Was*, involving the imbibing of many "high quality beers", often while recording, leading to the odd Bloody Mary-quaffing morning after. In downtime, Vernon introduced the girls to both Kubrick's The Shining (inspiring a song) and the Twin Peaks box set, both of which, in the remote setting, utterly freaked the sisters. "It was nightmare central," Camilla recoils. "Fucking harrowing."

Both Vernon and The Staves say they hope to continue their fruitful collaboration, even if there are no firm plans as yet, except perhaps for a cover versions Christmas party gig the sisters are planning to throw in Watford, where they will perform choice hits by the likes of Toto, Bruce Hornsby and Hall & Oates. Vernon will be guest of honour and wants to sing The Waterboys' The Whole Of The Moon.

"Oh man," he grins, clearly enlivened by his new found 'sisters'. "It's gotta happen."

Tom Doyle

FOREVER AGAIN

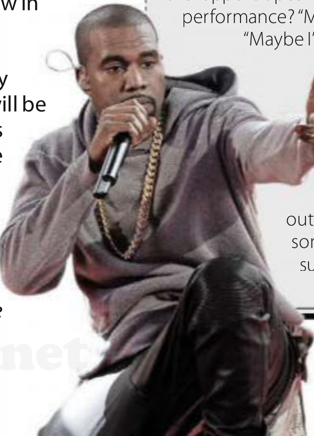
Vernon talks producing, festivals and Kanye.

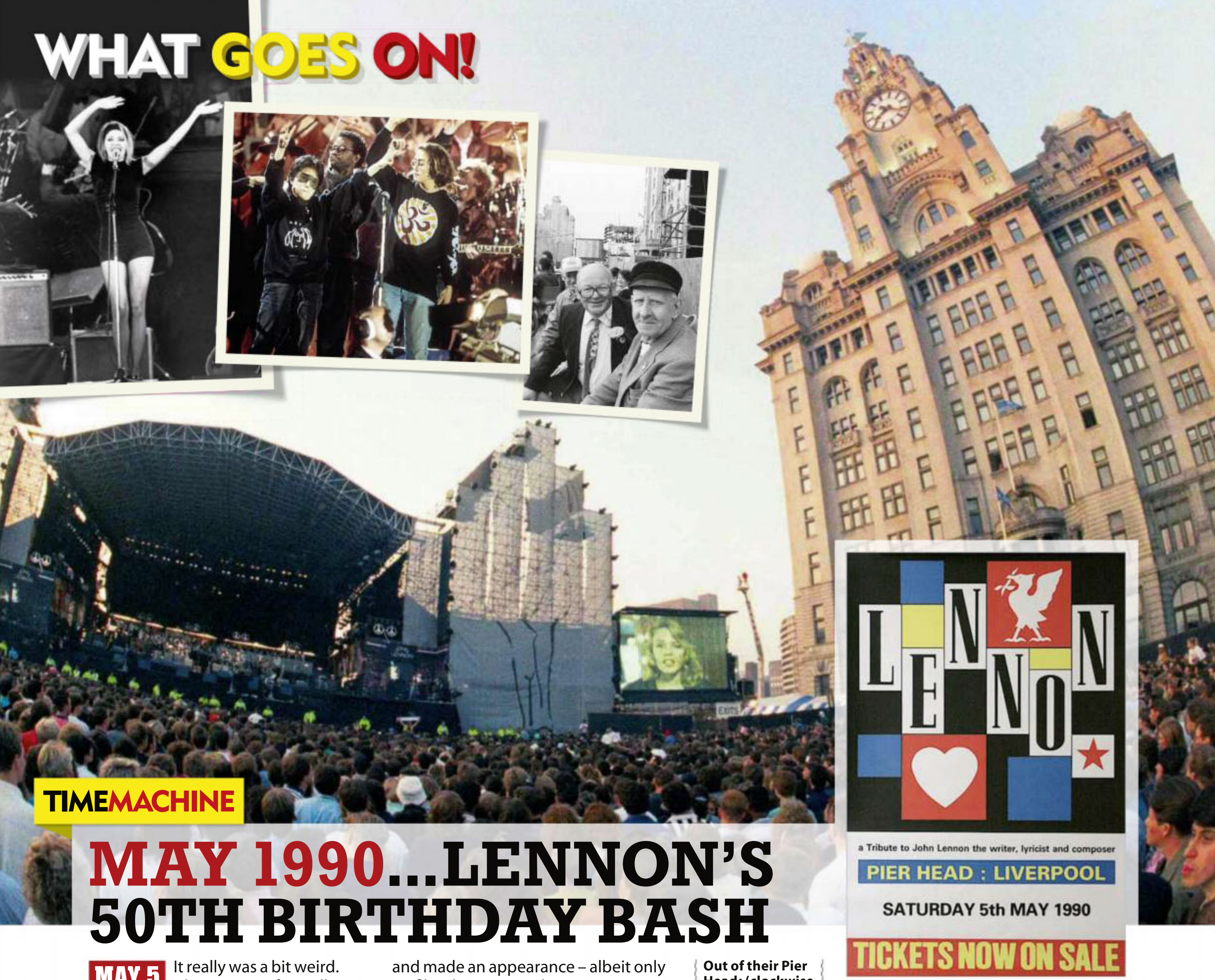
While mulling over whether or not Bon Iver will ever return to the studio, Justin Vernon hasn't been idle. His April Base recording facility is buzzing with activity 28 days of every month, and recent releases include last year's *De Oro* from Vernon's stoner rap-rock offshoot band Jason Feathers (featuring Minneapolis rhymer Astronautalis) and his production of The Blind Boys Of Alabama's 2013 release *I'll Find A Way*.

Vernon is quietly frustrated that the latter seemed to fly under the radar. "Man, nobody fucking heard it," he softly fumes. "I'm kinda pissed off about it."

Recently, in cahoots with The National's Aaron Dessner, he's been putting together the Eaux Claires Festival in Eau Claire, Wisconsin (July 17-18), which notably sees the headline live return of Bon Iver. "A whole bunch of art and shit's gonna go down," he promises.

Meanwhile, given his past connections with Kanye West (Vernon featuring on both *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* and *Yeezus*), MOJO wonders whether we might expect a guest appearance at the rapper's upcoming Glastonbury performance? "Maybe," he teases. "Maybe I'll call him." Other than that, Vernon seems utterly content merely kicking back. "Holding down the fort," he drawls. "Hanging out with my cats. Taking some time. Letting your subconscious kinda do the walking."





TIMEMACHINE

MAY 1990...LENNON'S 50TH BIRTHDAY BASH

MAY 5 It really was a bit weird. About 30,000 fans, all gathered at Liverpool's Pier Head to celebrate what would have been John Lennon's 50th birthday – but doing so in early May instead of October, the actual month of Lennon's birth.

No matter, the intentions were solid enough. Though UK viewers got to watch it later that day, the event was aimed at worldwide TV, and the filmed shindig was to be broadcast in much adjusted shape on October 9, the date when John squalled his first note at Liverpool's Maternity Hospital.

Yoko Ono had sponsored the proceedings. Paul McCartney had raised his digits in traditional fashion and made an appearance – albeit only on film shot at an earlier concert. Ringo Starr, who exchanged video greetings with Macca, donated a pre-recorded version of I Call Your Name in the company of Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne. But that was all there was Beatlewise. George Harrison made no contribution at all. Yoko explained that when she tried to contact him, George simply "wasn't in".

Still, Kylie Minogue was there to strut her stuff and yell, "come on boys" amid a pop-dance makeover of Help! (complete with rap). So all was fine in Pepperland. Or was it?

Peter Naylor, a local reporter, had his doubts at the outset. "Not many people in Merseyside have a spare £25," he reflected on learning the ticket price, before adding his assessment of the advertised line-up – "Kylie, Lou Reed, Deacon Blue and B.B. King are all crowd pullers in their own right but they are an odd mix." One local bystander added: "This isn't for Liverpool, it's pure Hollywood."

Council spokesman Steve McGriskin was more upbeat. "For the first time since The Beatles split, Ringo and Paul will appear on the same show."

So, the augurs were good. Dave Edmunds had been named musical director of the event. A solid choice: Lennon had been an admirer of the Welsh rocker since first hearing his cover of I Hear You Knockin'. Thus, at 8pm on that Saturday evening, Edmunds led the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra on-stage to a chorus of cheers. He played it safe, performing A Day In The Life, The Ballad Of John And Yoko and Strawberry Fields Forever in faithful versions.

What ensued tallied with pundit Naylor's prognosis: a black-clad Cyndi Lauper rocked heavily and gyrated though Working Class Hero; Randy Travis added a touch of Nashville to Nowhere Man; Natalie Cole donated a somewhat lacklustre Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds and Ticket To Ride; Hall And Oates harmonised and went acoustic on Don't Let Me Down and Julia; Jealous Guy and Mother were delivered falteringly by Lou Reed,

Out of their Pier Head: (clockwise from main) the crowd and the Liver Building; Kylie cavorts; Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon sing; locals; poster; Macca (onscreen); John oversees the final sing-along.

> "THIS ISN'T FOR LIVERPOOL, IT'S PURE HOLLYWOOD."
> A Liverpool local

generating both laughter and applause from different elements of the crowd.

And so it proceeded, as Al Green, Terence Trent D'Arby, Wet Wet Wet, Deacon Blue, Lou Gramm, The Moody Blues, Roberta Flack, Dave Stewart, The Christians, Joe Cocker and Lenny Kravitz performed their interpretations of Lennon-connected material. DJ Mike Read and Superman actor Christopher Reeve provided linking chat, with Yoko and Sean Lennon also making appearances and introductions, and leading the mass singing of Give Peace A Chance that closed the event.

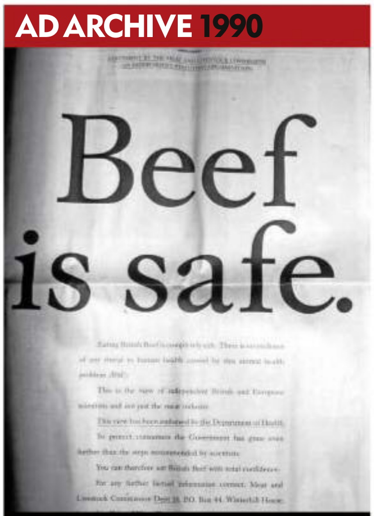
But there *was* one genuine Beatle playing in Liverpool that night. Their former drummer's outfit The Pete Best Band had a gig with The Fourmost at the Philharmonic Hall. As for one-time Beatles manager Allan Williams, he was organising an all-night Mersey-beat Ball at the Grafton Rooms, informing The Guardian that: "This is for my pension fund. This is the sort of thing that happens every 50 years and I won't be around next time!"

As for the main event, with various adjustments it was eventually screened as an 88-minute special in the US on December 7, hosted by Michael Douglas and boosted by further archive performances of Lennon compositions from the likes of Elton John, U2 and Michael Jackson.

And so the Lennons' Spirit Foundation, in whose name the event was held, emerged with its reputation intact. Despite the fact that the original show was never going to make any money – the artists involved appeared for expenses only, but production costs alone were estimated at £1.5 million – some time later it was announced that the University Of Liverpool had received more than half-a-million pounds from the Lennon estate. The money was invested in a trust to fund scholarships for UK and European Economic Community children. Job done, then.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1990



Beef is safe.

Not sinister drug slang from Madchester days, just the government telling us not to worry about Mad Cow disease.

Peter J Walsh, Ian Tilton, Liverpool Echo (5), Rex (4), Press Association

ALSO THIS MONTH

CREAMY ERIC

1 **Eric Clapton** (above) plays at the Los Angeles Forum on his US tour and is joined by **George Harrison** for Crossroads and Sunshine Of Your Love.

ZEP YEP

1 **Robert Plant**, **Jimmy Page**, **John Paul Jones** and **Jason Bonham** get together for a short set at the Heath Hotel, Bewdley, after Bonham weds childhood sweetheart Jan Charteris.

EMILY REMLER DIES

4 Jazz guitarist **Emily Remler**, 32, dies of a heart attack. She once told People magazine, "I may look like a nice Jewish girl from New Jersey but inside I'm a 60-year-old heavy-set black man with a big thumb like Wes Montgomery."

KILLER THRILLER

12 Topping the UK 45s: **Adamski**'s Killer. The record's vocal is by Seal, who is not credited on the label.

THE STUART PERIOD

13 Granada TV networks a 48-minute doc on ex-Beatle, the late **Stuart Sutcliffe** titled Midnight Angel.

SO LONG, SAM

16 **Sammy Davis Jr** dies from throat cancer, aged 64. On May 18, all lights on Las Vegas's Strip go out for 10 minutes in tribute to the Rat Packer.

JUNGLE ROCK

18 **The Rolling Stones** open their Urban Jungle European tour at the De Kuip Stadium, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

GUN WEDDING

24 **Guns N' Roses' Axl Rose** files for divorce from wife **Erin Everly**, daughter of **Don**, less than a month after they'd wed in Las Vegas. He says he wrote the hit Sweet Child O' Mine for her.

OIL GO CRAZY

30 Aussie eco-rockers **Midnight Oil** play a midnight gig outside the Exxon Building, Manhattan.

Nishful thinking: documentary presenters James Brown and Stuart Maconie (front) go Madchester; (inset) locals flaunt their trousering.

MAD CHESTER
THE SOUND OF THE NORTH

MANCS GET MAD FOR IT

MAY 6 **Granada Television screens Madchester – The Sound Of The North, an hour-long documentary on the flourishing Manc scene. Featured acts include Happy Mondays, who are filmed on tour in the Netherlands, MC Tunes, 808 State, A Guy Called Gerald and Northside: clothiers Leo Stanley of Afflecks Palace and Joe Bloggs magnate Shami Ahmed appear showing off jumbo strides and brightly coloured blousons. There are also scenes filmed inside the Haçienda club and a chat with designers Central Station. Three weeks later, on May 27, The Stone Roses play their much-mythologised outdoor concert at Widnes' Spike Island.**

Wanky panky: Madge harps on.

MADONNA SKIRTS ARREST

MAY 29 On tour in Canada, Madonna gets word that Toronto police will arrest her if she goes ahead with her simulated masturbation routine while performing Like A Virgin on her Blond Ambition Tour. When the singer, whose Vogue single is top of the US charts, defiantly includes the raunchy portion of her act anyway, the police decline to clap her in irons.

TOP TEN

US SINGLES MAY 19

1	**VOGUE**	MADONNA	SIRE
2	**NOTHING COMPARES 2 U**	SINÉAD O'CONNOR	ENSIGN/CHRYSALIS
3	**ALL I WANNA DO IS MAKE LOVE TO YOU**	HEART	CAPITOL
4	**HOLD ON**	WILSON PHILLIPS	SBK
5	**SENDING ALL MY LOVE**	LINEAR	ATLANTIC
6	**ALRIGHT**	JANET JACKSON	A&M
7	**I WANNA BE RICH**	CALLOWAY	SOLAR
8	**POISON**	BELL BIV DEVOE	MCA
9	**IT MUST HAVE BEEN LOVE**	ROXETTE	EMI
10	**WHAT IT TAKES**	AEROSMITH	GEFFEN

Holding tight: Wilson Phillips at Number 4.

Eclectic warrior: John Renbourn on-stage with Pentangle at the Isle Of Wight Festival, August 31, 1969.

1944-2015

RENAISSANCE MAN

Master guitarist John Renbourn, who also played with Bert Jansch and Pentangle, left us in March.

Bert Jansch had the charisma and Davy Graham had the mystique, but among all the acoustic guitarists forging Britain's '60s folk revolution, John Renbourn had the technique. Picking up banjo at five, introduced to early music at 11 by a teacher sympathetic to his talents, Renbourn was a polymath who stretched beyond the blues and traditional template of folk guitar to incorporate elements of renaissance music, even medieval plainsong, into the baroque sound he made his own: rich with Arthurian romance, somewhat sad, very English.

Although too singular a character to stay there long, Renbourn did enter the mainstream briefly with Pentangle. Bringing classical sophistication to the folk-jazz-blues-rock supergroup, he was key to Pentangle's impure approach. "I think that you'll find folk purists not liking you is a recipe for success," said Renbourn, who for Pentangle's take on the traditional ballad House Carpenter played sitar.

Born in London in 1944, shortly after his father was killed in the Second World War, Renbourn might have settled into middle-class respectability had not his mother remarried an army physicist who didn't approve of his stepson's musical tendencies. Escaping the family home in Guildford aged 16, he busked around Europe with fellow guitarists Davy Graham and Wizz Jones. "I was faced with the terrible dilemma of having to get a job," said Renbourn, "and found myself preferring to travel and play."

It didn't take long for Renbourn to become a mainstay at Les Cousins, the basement below a Greek restaurant in Soho that was at the heart of a new, distinctly scruffy scene. He met Bert Jansch, his fellow guitarist in Pentangle and the man with whom he is most closely associated, after a night of drinking at nearby pub The Scots Hoose. The friendship led to *Bert And John*, the 1966 album of mostly instrumental guitar duets, recorded over an evening in their flat in St John's Wood, north London. Renbourn considered the reverence accorded to the album "hilarious", explaining, "all we ever did was play things that were semi-worked out and made up on the spot." Rather more considered was 1977's *A Maid In Bedlam*, a still-undervalued perfect expression of folk baroque.

> "FOLK PURISTS NOT LIKING YOU IS A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS."

Renbourn wasn't one to court fame. He recovered from the drink-fuelled madness of Pentangle by decamping to Devon in the mid '70s, and did not work with them again until a full reunion in 2007, healing a long-held rift with Jansch in the process.

Renbourn spent much of the last two decades either holding guitar tutorials in Europe or playing solo gigs up and down Britain, after which he generally drove back to his remote house in Hawick in the Scottish Borders. On March 24, he was due at the Ferry in Glasgow for a gig with his old busking friend Wizz Jones, but he never made it. The following morning police found Renbourn at his house, where he had died from a heart attack. He was 70.

Will Hodgkinson

Getty Images

THE LEGACY

Album: The John Renbourn Group *A Maid In Bedlam* (Transatlantic, 1977)

The Sound: Renbourn was never concerned with authenticity but he was a virtuosic player with a deep knowledge of British folk music. This allowed [illegible] groundbreaking album, where folk standards Blackwaterside, Reynardine and John Barleycorn were reimagined somewhere between 17th century Britain and pre-colonial India by way of the pre-Raphaelite movement. Pentangle's Jacqui McShee and Sue Draheim sing and tabla player Keshav Sathe keeps the beat throughout, making this a medieval/Indian folk rock masterpiece.

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

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Rocking from the get-go: All Right Now man Andy Fraser.

ANDY FRASER

BASSIST WITH FREE

BORN 1952

Andy Fraser's legend hung on co-writing All Right Now, Free's eternal groove-and-grunt radioplay-record-busting 1970 classic. It started with the aftermath of a bad gig and him telling his bandmates in the dressing room, "It's all right now". For a couple of years he and Free vocalist Paul Rodgers had a mighty writing partnership, which also produced I'm A Mover, Fire And Water, The Stealer, Ride On A Pony and My Brother Jake. But one suspects that, from the time he finally quit Free in 1972 until his death at 62 following lengthy resistance to AIDS and cancer, he may never have felt he'd fulfilled everything he had inside him.

Born in London, son of a white woman and a mixed-race Guyanan, as a child he "demanded piano tuition". Come his mid-teens, he adapted his learning to play what he really loved, R&B.

Aged 15, he played briefly with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Free would ignite in 1968. "We were roaring from the get-go," he told me in 1997. The kid promptly declared himself leader and even the fearsome Rodgers bowed to his supreme confidence.

However, after Free, his career and personal life turned patchwork. Subsequent bands fizzled, but he did nicely as a songwriter, his post-Free compositions taken up by the likes of Joe Cocker, Robert Palmer and Rod Stewart.

All seemed steady when he moved to California in the mid '70s and married long-time Australian girlfriend Ri, with whom he had daughters Hannah and Jasmine.

However, they broke up in the late '80s, and during our 1997 interview, Fraser told me why. He was gay. And HIV positive. Having said it, he asked me not to include the "revelation" in the Free feature I was working on. He went on to describe how he'd worked through it all over the previous 10 years by driving across America in a motor home sporting a solar-powered studio, writing as he wandered.

At last, in 2005, with the release (in every sense) of a new solo album, *Naked… And Finally Free*, Fraser both came out and talked about the agonising – "to the point of incapacitation" – he had gone through.

"One has to be comfortable in one's own skin, or it will eat you up inside," he said in an interview on the Let It Rock website.

Fraser's gardener found his body in his car at his home in Temecula. Police say they are investigating the cause of death.

Phil Sutcliffe

THEY ALSO SERVED

BLACKPOOL-BORN **CYNTHIA LENNON** (b.1939) was the first wife of **John Lennon** and mother of **Julian Lennon**. She and John would divorce when he left her for **Yoko Ono** in 1968. She later wrote two memoirs of her life with the Beatle and was sanguine when auctioning off her Fabs memorabilia. After she succumbed to cancer at her home in Spain, **Paul McCartney** paid tribute to her as, "a lovely lady… I will always have great memories of our times together."

KEYBOARDIST **MICHAEL BROWN** (b.1949) of **Left Banke** co-authored the baroque-pop New Yorkers' 1966 smash Walk Away Renee – composed for bassist **Tom Finn**'s girlfriend – and wrote 1967's Pretty Ballerina alone. He left the group in 1967, and would go on to work with **Montage, Stories** and **The Beckies**.

BASSIST **MIKE PORCARO** (b.1955) joined his brothers **Jeff** and **Steve** in soft rock titans Toto in 1982. Suffering from Lou Gehrig's Disease, he retired from touring in 2007. The group split in 2008, reforming in 2010 to play benefits for their bandmate and to raise awareness of his condition.

DRUMMER **PRESTON RITTER** (b.1949) joined Los Angeles psych-garagers **Electric Prunes** for their influential 1966 hit I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night). He left the following year, and went on to work as a private investigator, drum instructor and as teacher of theology in South Korea. He had been suffering from kidney problems.

TRUMPETER **LEW SOLOFF** (b.1944) was a part of jazz-rockers Blood Sweat & Tears from 1968 to 1974. Across his long career, the New Yorker would also record solo and work with jazz luminaries including **Gil Evans, Maynard Ferguson**, **Carla Bley**, **Ornette Coleman**, **George Benson** and **Dizzy Gillespie**.

TWISTED SISTER drummer **AJ PERO** (b.1959) played with Long Island's make-up metal diehards from 1981 to 1986, appearing on big hits I Wanna Rock and We're Not Gonna Take It, and again from 1997. He suffered a suspected heart attack on the tour bus of hard rock supergroup **Adrenaline Mob**, and was declared dead in Poughkeepsie, NY.

SONGWRITER and country pianist **DON ROBERTSON** (b.1922) found international success with his 1956 single The Happy Whistler. Often with co-writer **Hal Blair**, he composed songs recorded by **Elvis Presley**, **Hank Snow**, **The Chordettes**, **Al Martino**, **Frankie Laine**, **Lorne Greene**, and **Les Paul & Mary Ford**. He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall Of Fame in 1972.

GUITARIST **JEREMY BROWN** (b.c1982) had collaborated with ex-Stone Temple Pilots frontman **Scott Weiland** since 2008, latterly as part of **The Wildabouts**. He died the day before the group's debut album *Blaster* was released on March 31.

DRUMMER **BOB BURNS** (b.1950) co-founded Lynyrd Skynyrd in 1964 and finally left in 1974, exhausted by touring. In 2006 he rejoined his former bandmates when they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He was killed in a car accident in northern Georgia.

VOICE **JOSIE JONES** (b.unknown) appeared on releases by **The Mighty Wah!** and **Pete Wylie** in the 1980s, including 1986's near-hit Diamond Girl. In 1990, conspiring with Wylie, **Robin Guthrie**, **Andrew Weatherall**, **Michael Clark** and **Jake Walters**, hers was the inimitable vocal on **Big Hard Excellent Fish**'s Imperfect List, an acid litany of hated objects sometimes used by **Morrissey** as intro music at concerts. In 2013 she updated the song as And The Question Remains.

STAFFORDSHIRE-BORN **JACKIE TRENT** (b.1940) reached Number 1 in May '65 with her solo 45 Where Are You Now, and would go on to great success as a songwriter with husband **Tony Hatch**. Her co-compositions would be sung by the likes of **Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin** and **Scott Walker**, whose version of Joanna went Top 10 in 1968. Her other works included the theme to Australian TV soap Neighbours and Stoke City's Number 34 chant We'll Be With You, serendipitously recorded shortly before the Potters' victory in the 1972 Football League Cup Final. She died in Spain.

Clive Prior

Heart of Stoke: Mrs Music, Jackie Trent.

Getty Images, Rex (2)

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THE MOJO INTERVIEW

Declaring **"the day is my enemy"**, Essex hip hopper **Liam Howlett** took rave global and said no to **Madonna** and **Bowie**. Yet he still feels **The Prodigy** have a point to prove. "I don't want to know **why I make this music**," he snarls.

Interview by **IAN HARRISON** • Portrait by **TOM OLDHAM**

VISIT LIAM HOWLETT'S STUDIO – A darkened space situated in The Prodigy's management offices in King's Cross – and you'll see much memorabilia to interest the long-term fan. On the way in, there's a bottle of promotional lager for their globe-busting album *The Fat Of The Land*, still undrunk since 1997; nearby is the original Roland W-30 sampler he used for his earliest rave productions. Leaning against a wall is Les Edwards' glorious gatefold sleeve art for 1994's *Music For The Jilted Generation*. Resplendent in a gilt frame, it depicts a crusty reveller giving some riot cops the finger across a ravine, as he prepares to cut a rope bridge from their polluted dystopia to his sylvan glade where the party never ends.

The battle over '94's Criminal Justice Act is long settled – The Man won – but The Prodigy endure. When their saucer-eyed 45 Charly mixed dance beats and a BBC public safety film for kids and hit Number 3 in 1991, you mightn't have bet on the Essex dance crew being lasting contenders. Yet throughout the decade they successfully mutated, melding guitars and rock attack with repetitive beats in ways that satisfied increasing numbers of thrill-seekers in crowds and home listeners alike. The preposterous success of *The Fat Of The Land* and its attendant singles Firestarter and Smack My Bitch Up – brutal yet sophisticated blasts of adrenalin that made a globally-recognisable rave demon of co-frontman Keith Flint – would be followed by seven years of silence, but in 2004 the band would regroup and resume operations. One of the few '90s British electronic groups still standing and sustaining, their latest album, *The Day Is My Enemy*, is a typically fugitive collision of bass, breaks and distortion, with guest spots for Martina Topley-Bird and Sleaford Mods' Jason Williamson. It has sufficient spleen to shame EDM producers half their age.

Today, the 43-year-old Howlett shows MOJO some of the toys he's accrued – an orange example of the '70s cult Micronauts range is one of 10 he's bought off eBay – before getting a bottle of water and perching on a swivel chair. All in grey, he has two-tone rough-cut hair and tattoos showing from the collar and wrist of his fun fur coat, and exhibits the composure of one who knows his own mind. But, regularly punctuating statements with "you know what I mean?", he can also be blunt. "I don't want to know why I want to do it and I don't want to know why I'm not interested in doing any other music," he states. "I use music to attack. That's what my job is."

WE'RE NOTWORTHY

Steve Hillage on Essex solidarity, respect and amazing bottom end.

"I first met The Prodigy at Tribal Gathering in 1995. I'm a semi-Essex boy, I grew up in Chingford, so there was a link! Liam's an amazing producer, what he can do with that amazing bottom end is 100 per cent brilliant. I've big respect for him. Hats off!"

Rex

There's a fox's head in the studio and an urban fox on the LP cover. What gives?

I was working at Sarm Studios in west London, going in at six at night and leaving at four in the morning. I'd come out and always see this fox. I thought, "He's basically the same as us, doing ➢

things on his own terms, a rebel in his way." Prodigy music's always lived at night, so it was a good symbol. Writing at night's a different thing – shit goes down, exciting things happen. It was the way to amp up the intensity.

What was the first time you felt that intensity, musically?

(*Immediately*) Concrete Jungle by The Specials, the live version off *Dance Craze*. That terrace vibe. I was 11. My dad listened to Queen and Pink Floyd, but when he bought me an alarm clock radio, that was my cassette. I found myself in record shops staring at the *Specials* album and thinking, "Man, those guys are cool, I want to be in a gang like that." It was my first entry into any sort of youth culture.

You grew up in Braintree in Essex. How was that?

We lived on an estate – playing fields, suburban, boring shit really. My dad's a sales director for these glue guns on the industrial side. He was always working, always stressed out. He was a good dad though. My mum fucked off when I was 10. That was probably the start of the angry Liam, you know what I mean? The split definitely wobbled us, we had nannies to look after me and my sister. I was a happy kid, though, I think.

What got you into hip hop?

I heard Grandmaster Flash On The Wheels Of Steel at my friend's house. "Fucking hell, a mix of other peoples' songs? I reckon I could do that." So I started doing pause-button mixing on my hi-fi. By '86 I was listening to Mike Allen's Capital Rap Show – I'm responding to music that's got some kind of rowdiness to it and I knew very early on what I liked. When I was probably 15 I got a Technics turntable, a mixer, and a shitty secondary deck. I was learning how to mix then, proper. I met these dudes from Chelmsford, and that's how Cut 2 Kill was formed. We started putting demos together, but I knew it wasn't really gonna happen, their fucking raps weren't that good. But we were having fun, man, doing graffiti, going to see Westwood. I'd never give those times up.

When did you convert to raving?

I remember the turning point. In '89 we'd gone to Great Yarmouth, it might've been Westwood. When he'd finished, a rave DJ came on and the whole thing totally fucking changed into this acid house party. A different crowd came in, the lights changed… the music was still dark and hard though. Lil' Louis' French Kiss, Voodoo Ray… I liked the primal tribalness of it. So much more fun than standing in the corner frowning [at a hip hop night]. Before then, there was an incident that happened, it was MC Crazy Noddy at Swiss Cottage Community Centre. He'd invited us down and halfway through these dudes come over and say, "Out the back." Took all our money, taxed our shit. I was like, "I'm fed up with this. Where's the respect?"

Was it a dramatic change?

A whole different world opened up. This was '89, at the end of the Summer of Love. I started going to the Astoria and these massive raves in Essex, out every weekend, doing acid, doing pills… Someone said to me – this is hilarious – "If you suffer from hay fever watch the E's man!" I've had really bad hay fever always, so I said, "OK I'll stick with the acid." Makes sense doesn't it? You'd get in this club, The Barn in Braintree, and the night seemed to last about five minutes. When you came out, then the fun would begin. Convoys of 100 cars driving to this nudist beach in St Osyth… Set up turntables in the back of a van, soundsystem, bang! There was this mad house in Colchester, it had a caravan in the garden with a strobe on full and a soundsystem. Fucking great memories.

When did you start recording this new music?

Sometimes I'd come back from The Barn and record, headphones on, remembering stuff I liked and kind of copying it, but changing it to my own little bits and pieces. I wrote a lot of those early songs that way. I'd bought this sampler, a Roland W-30 – 14 seconds of sampling time, you just learned how to make it go a long way. It sounds really crunchy because it's very poor quality. I've still got it.

Is this when you met future Prodigy members Keith Flint and Leeroy Thornhill?

I met Keith at the rave on the beach. He was a bit of a face – him and Leeroy were like, the ravers. It's a classic Prodigy story – I did him a mix tape, one side was all my songs, like 12 tunes. I'd already taken the demo to XL when Keith approached me at The Barn saying, "Listen man, me and Leeroy can dance, do you fancy getting something going?" This other friend Ziggy was on board as our manager, and it was his idea that we needed someone on the mike, like a frontman. The first gig we did at the Four Aces in Dalston, I met Maxim"

The last piece of the puzzle?

That was the gang. He was like a reggae MC, trying to rock over all he songs, so I said the vibe's good but the music needs to breathe more. The next one we did he got it right. I've got to mention that for a few gigs we had a female dancer, Sharky, but she was at the end of her rave days. Then it was down to us four.

Garish rave tune Charly was a Number 3 hit in September '91. How do you regard the track now?

I love it man. I've got all the good memories of the reasons I did it, and playing it at all the correct places, like Telepathy in east London. I was more always into the East London sound of rave, it was the next logical thing to mix hip hop beats with the acid house. Shut Up & Dance, Genaside II, DJ Hype, these are the originals, followed quickly by me!

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Liam's lore: Portrait of a raver.

1 The estate years: the young Liam Howlett poses with Polaroid cameras, late '70s.

2 The front cover of Mixmag, August 1992, takes aim at Charly. Howlett duly chucks the issue on a bonfire in the video for single Fire.

3 Howlett as DJ Fame in the late-'80s Cut 2 Kill days, alongside his fellow Essex rap O.G., Severe.

4 Everybody buzzin': The Prodigy in 1991 (from left) Leeroy Thornhill, Maxim Reality, Howlett and Keith Flint.

5 Twisted firestarters: at the onset of *The Fat Of The Land*-mania, 1996, with Keith Flint wearing his celebrated stars'n' stripes jumper.

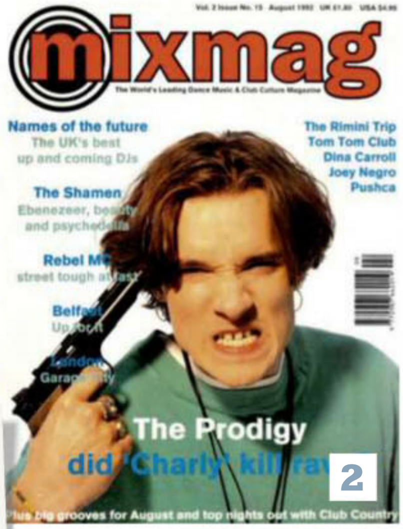
6 Howlett having a quiet evening with ex-brother-in-law Liam Gallagher: "Now, I don't speak to him much."

7 The re-energised Prodigy trio line-up when touring *Invaders Must Die*, 2009.

8 In St Lucia, filming the video for Voodoo People, 1994, with Thornhill (second right) as rum-drinking spirit boss Baron Samedi.

9 Portrayed in psychedelic splendour, September 1994: Liam Howlett and Maxim Reality channelling "the spirit and chaos of the rave".

Courtesy of Liam Howlett (2), Corbis, Phil Nicholls Photography, Steve Double/Camera Press, Retna, Xposure, Getty Images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Plus big grooves for August and top nights out with Club Country
2

***Experience* still sounds great.**

I love it all. It's funny, I bump into it now and then and I'm transformed back to that era. That's what music does more than anything else, even if you only have three brain cells left, it can drill into those and speak to you like nothing else – it's time travel in the mind. But we outgrew that rave scene. The DJs didn't want to play our tunes and it was wearing a bit thin for me as well. It'd turned into cartoon-land, everything had sped up – things people might say we were responsible for – and it'd just gone stupid.

***Music For The Jilted Generation* in '94 surprised listeners by using rock guitars. Where did that come from?**

I remember very clearly being in the back of a limo in America. We'd bought Rage Against The Machine's first album, put it on at 11 and at that moment I thought, "This is where to take this. We can either stop this band and start another one, or just let me chew over this for a bit. I can change it." I hate musical purity. Purism kills things. So we brought the raves with us, but there were also people into Rage Against The Machine and Metallica, there was that clash. *Jilted…* was my first real album – I was obsessed by making a start, a beginning and an end. But when I listen to it now it's just too fucking long.

How did you regard it being seen as an anti-Criminal Justice Bill soundtrack?

It wasn't. We started to get people attaching themselves to us that weren't really into the vibes, people up trees and all this shit. We weren't having any of it – we were like, "The music's ours, we aren't your spokesmen." We've never been a political band. Maybe this is my naivety, but maybe we are in ourselves political by being here and doing what we do. But we don't represent that knowingly. Anyone who says there *should* be more politics? I'd say listen to it more and make your own mind up. You might find some.

How did you go about recording a song like '96 mega-smash Firestarter?

It was getting the balance of what would work on-stage. The original demo had Keith's lyrics all the way through. But the beats are paramount and the lyrics are there to back the music up. So I pulled out some of the lyrics to give it some space, so it's lyric, lyric, two bars of space, repeat – we always call it a tennis match between the music and the lyric. Everything up to *Fat Of The Land*, I used to be able to finish tunes there and then. I can't do that any more. I'll get a buzz and I'll do a minute and I'll know it's got legs if it stands up in a week's time.

> "When *The Fat Of The Land* went to **Number 1**, that was 'Now people will take us **seriously**'."

When did you realise Firestarter was presaging a whole new peak of insanity?

I'm pretty sure Brixton Academy was one of the first gigs we played it at. Keith was shitting himself. We did the tune and there was this silence, and then like there was this *roar*. I thought, "Yeah." It just erupted, came up though the fucking pavement, seeped in through the walls. Radio 1 jumped back on The Prodigy then. Britpop had taken everyone's attention but Firestarter came up behind and smashed people over the head.

It's around this time you turn down offers to produce David Bowie and Madonna…

If it was Chuck D asking I would have done it, but they didn't mean anything to me. I remember Bowie coming into the dressing room when we did gigs together in Germany, we had some great chats about drugs and stuff. He was someone I gained a lot of respect for very quickly. One thing I will say about Madonna is, she took the initiative herself to come and find us, I thought that was respect. So we signed to her label in America. We've never cared about chart positions, but I did enjoy it when *The Fat Of The Land* went to Number 1 in America. That was like (*flicks Vs with both hands*), "Now people will take us seriously."

Was respect lacking?

I think respect was always there but I think we confused people about what we were. That was when people realised we ain't going away. Smack My Bitch Up is still the anthem, by the way. Trust me, every country we've been to, when the DJ drops that the whole place has gone fucking mental. I think it's a good album and it had the big hitters, but I don't think it was consistent. I don't really care about it, to be fair.

How did it feel when the Beastie Boys' Ad-Rock took you to task for Smack My Bitch Up in '98?

That there's someone I've grown up with and respect and fucking love, and all of a sudden they've just wiped out all that respect. We were playing Reading before them, and he rung me up at home and basically said, "If you play Smack My Bitch Up, we might have to say something." I thought maybe he's ringing

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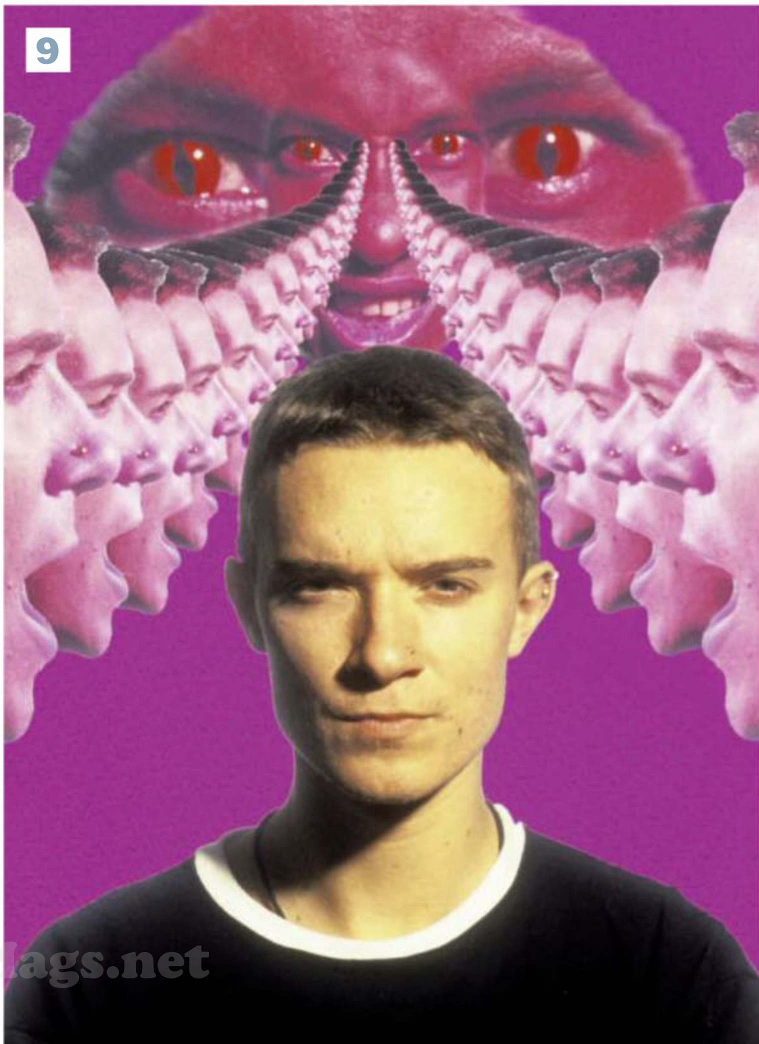

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Ewe gotta fight for your right to party: Howlett keeps it real in King's Cross, with anthromorphic and robot *objet d'art*.

> "I'm **suspicious** of bands who carry on as if everything's **smooth**. People aren't programmed to be like that, it's **not normal**."

up to do a collaboration. I was so taken aback. I went to Reading with anger – "Where the fuck are they? Come on, let's go," you know what I mean? But it backfired on them because we're in England now and The Prodigy are loved in England, and Smack My Bitch Up is loved as an anthem. They got it so wrong. Fair enough, it's a confusing record for some people. Not for us.

It's seven years before you next release an album. Why?

We'd burned ourselves out. We've got a huge record that's Number 1 in 21 countries, we're touring America, Australia, fucking all over the place. I mean, we're having a laugh, we're on the rampage after the gigs getting slaughtered and partying. But I'm not writing, and when I do come home I'm too fucked to write… everything just came to a grinding halt.

Weren't you pressurised to capitalise on *The Fat Of The Land*'s success?

I remember having a conversation with XL. They wanted 'Fat Of The Land 2'. I point blank refused, and just totally fell out with them. Basically the whole thing was crumbling – in 2000 Leeroy said, "I'm fucked off, I'm leaving." He's still a good friend of the band but we don't really speak to him much, now. The rest of us all kind of dispersed. And then this silence started happening and this sort of paranoia set in.

Between who exactly?

Me and Keith. Always me and Keith, never Maxim. I love Keith to bits, he's my brother but it's like the working relationship and the friends relationship are completely different things and with some people that cannot be mixed. It was, "Did he say something?" Then Keith starts on his solo thing, and I couldn't understand why I always had to be the guy who had to start the music. Eventually we did do one song [2002's Baby's Got A Temper]… the relationship was very much at fucking breaking point. His manager, my manager, me and him at a table, that type of business. Really shit, you know.

DON'T INVADE MY SPACE

Tom Oldham (3)

What brought you back together?

He'd done his album, he'd got a deal possibly with Jimmy Iovine, for America. [Iovine] might've thought he was getting The Prodigy. When I finished [tortuously-gestated recorded-by-Howlett 2004 LP] *Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned*, which is kind of the lost Prodigy album, I sent a copy to Keith. When he pressed play, he said in his head his stereo just blew to bits. He said to his bandmates, "That's what we should be doing, you're a bunch of cunts, fuck off." That Flint thing fell apart and we got together and rebuilt the album for live, to take this thing back on the road again, because we missed it.

Did it immediately work?

We kind of started small, again. In 2005, XL decided the end of the relationship was happening and the *Singles* album was the last thing we were gonna do. We thought, "We might as well put something into it", but at this stage we thought the band is really over. When we came to that tour, it was like, new fans. Everyone was young again. That invigorated us, gave us the vibe back. The lads were a unit, good friends again. We were ready to celebrate our return with [2009 LP] *Invaders Must Die*, which was more celebratory, more triumphant.

It's surprising you came so close to collapse.

Yeah man. The only other time it got near to breaking was last year. In 2012 – we've almost got half of the album together then I suddenly say, "I've binned it all." There was a bust-up. I was frustrated, they were frustrated. [But] I'm always suspicious of bands who just carry on as if everything's smooth. What the fuck is that? People aren't programmed to be like that, it's not normal.

INSANE IN THE BRAINTREE

Liam H's best. By **Ian Harrison.**

THE BIG BANG!

Experience

(XL, 1992)

★★★★

The original breakbeat explosion, with Everybody In The Place, Out Of Space and yes, Charly, evoking the to-be-pill'd-up-was-very-heaven nuttiness of the rave scene, before dawn broke and the paranoia set in. Still takes your brain to another dimension.

THE MUTATION!

Music For The Jilted Generation

(XL, 1994)

★★★★

Proving they were here to stay, this second album combined dance firepower and metal grind, with the slowed-down, evil Poison and the PWEI-guesting Their Law far from the euphoria of Experience. See also that year's leathery remix of Method Man's Release Yo'Delf for proof of Howlett's art.

THE SMASH HIT!

Firestarter

(XL, 1996)

★★★★

Keith Flint steps up as Satanic Dennis The Menace on this spasming, gut-punching squall of psychosis that hit Number 1 and heralded the huge-selling *The Fat Of The Land* LP. Other singles Breathe and Smack My Bitch Up sustained the rave-punk intensity.

THE DEEJAY!

The Dirtchamber Sessions Volume 1

(XL, 1998)

★★★★

Where did Prodigy music come from? During the *Fat…* hurricane Howlett completed his own Adventures On The Wheels Of Steel, mixing cuts by Public Enemy, Meat Beat Manifesto, Frankie Bones, Sex Pistols, The J.B.'s and, ironically, Beastie Boys. Deft.

THE COMEBACK!

Invaders Must Die

(TAKE ME TO THE HOSPITAL, 2009)

★★★

A return to beats-and-noise basics, this showed how overrated stylistic evolution can be and faced down the nu-rave arrivistes, though tracks including the acid house/soul mash up Stand Up showed Howlett was still prone to going off-piste.

You've said you think you belong in the lineage of great British bands…

Yeah, because it's a timeline. We should be there, we're an important band because we represent an important part of British musical culture. Electronic music's been hijacked by pop music, but it can't just be owned by DJs, there's got to be a band to represent that end of British music. We're on that fucking timeline, Blur and Oasis there, The Prodigy there – but we're still here, we've just released an album. I dunno what Oasis are doing. Blur are back though.

Liam Gallagher was formerly married to your sister-in-law Nicole. Did you talk music, much?

We never spoke about music at all, actually. I loved Oasis though. Me and LG, as a mate, we had plenty of laughs. Now I don't speak to him much. Basically I've got to look after my sister-in-law, know what I mean?

You seem to eschew the celebrity life.

It could never offer me anything. Even from the beginning, when we were offered Top Of The Pops [they always declined], that world was a joke to us. It's something I tell my kids to keep well away from. Family is the normal side that pulls you back.

This music can be hard on the body. Do you think you may stop soon?

Not right this second. But we say to each other, as soon as we get any impression it isn't happening, we'll gladly bail out. We're not in it to fool ourselves. We've written this album, people are digging it, we dig it. We know what we're doing for the next year at least. The live side is basically what drives the whole thing. It's what the album's designed for. I feel sorry for some people, desperately trying to get their thing to fit into radio.

Are you a band or a producer with frontmen?

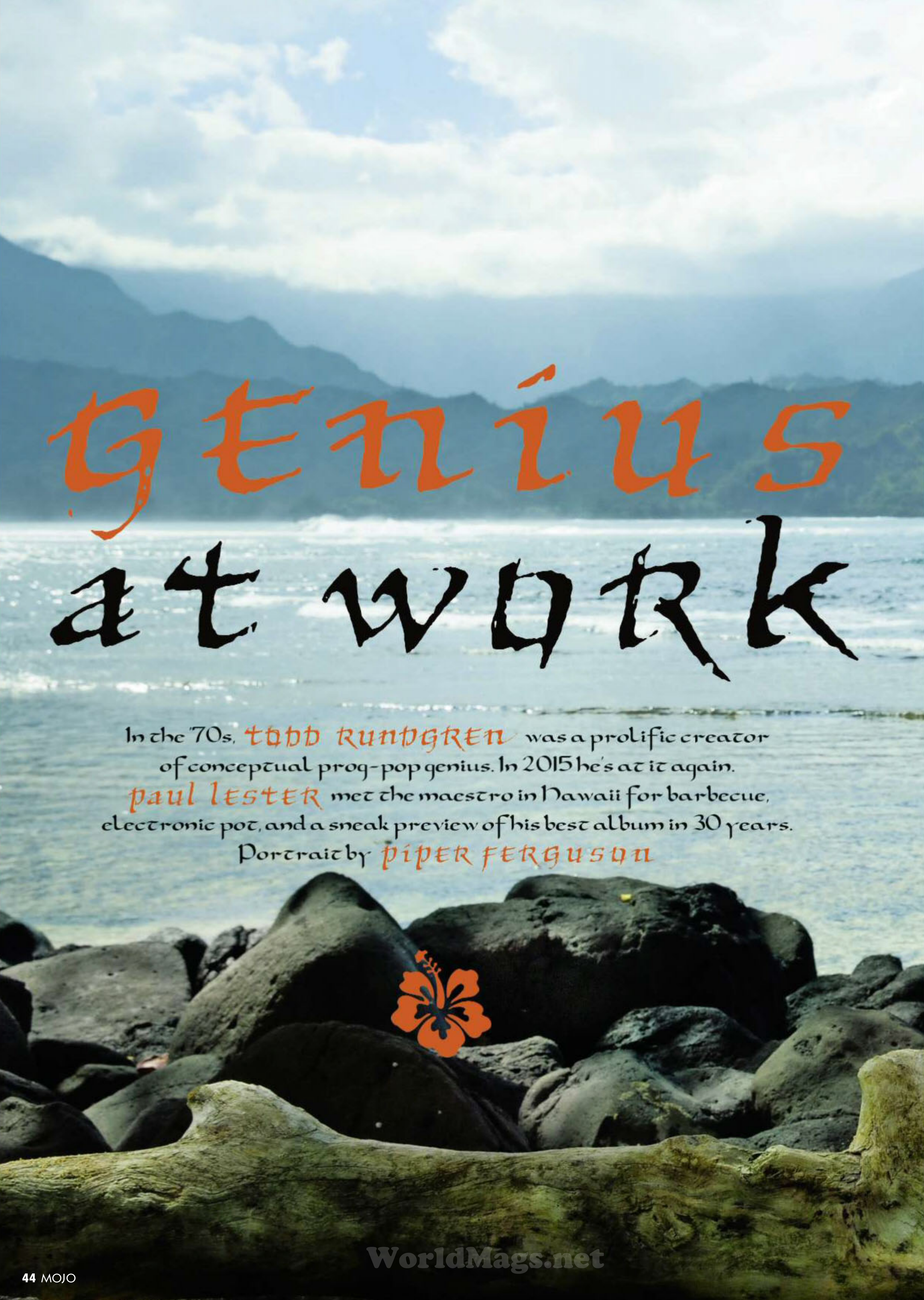
We view ourselves as a band, and with this album it was important we started off all together creating. A lot of the music came out of jams – Keith and Maxim would be here on mikes throwing bits and pieces in, going round for 25 minutes at a time and recording it. You kind of relearn about yourself every time you do a record. It can be quite insular, this type of music, and it is like a fucking void, you know, it's a terrifying black hole when you begin.

Is there a Prodigy archive of unheard tracks?

Yeah, in there (*points at a hard drive*) and various other hard drives… there's probably about 40 actual tracks, with another 20 bits we've done for live. Occasionally I'll revisit ideas: [*The Day Is My Enemy* song] Destroy was something I'd started about five years ago. Would we release it? Maybe. I mean, fans always want to hear the hidden gems – if they are gems, I dunno, they weren't good enough to come out. I'd prefer to move on really.

Are you sure you don't regret not producing David Bowie?

I'm glad I made the right decision. The best Bowie is the Bowie that didn't change his sound, know what I mean? That's the best Prodigy as well. The Prodigy is built on three things – the gang ethic and attitude of The Specials, Public Enemy Bomb Squad beats and the spirit and chaos of the rave. That's through every album. This new album might have the violence turned up a little more, but it is exactly the same.



Genius at work

In the '70s, **Todd Rundgren** was a prolific creator of conceptual prog-pop genius. In 2015 he's at it again. **Paul Lester** met the maestro in Hawaii for barbecue, electronic pot, and a sneak preview of his best album in 30 years. Portrait by **Piper Ferguson**

The ever-popular tortured artist: Todd Rundgren, Princeville on Kauai, Hawaii, January 28, 2015.

"Sausage, anyone?"

It is a hot, sunny day in February 2015, and Todd Rundgren is playing the perfect host. We are in the kitchen/dining room/lounge of Rundgren's home in Kauai, the fourth largest of the Hawaiian islands, and the youthful 66-year-old musician, producer and multi-instrumentalist is cooking bangers and putting the finishing touches to a pasta salad.

His wife Michele is watching him closely, as his last such concoction saw him pour most of a $12,000 bottle of wine – a gift from their film director pal, Francis Ford Coppola – into the mix. Smiling indulgently, she cites as a further example of his cavalier attitude towards money the time he turned down the use of his music for a Sprite ad, for which he would have received $175,000.

Rundgren is oblivious to the chatter; he's too busy ensuring that the assembled – MOJO, five hungry dogs, four fans-turned-friends, cosmic disco doyen Hans-Peter Lindstrøm and Emil Nikolaisen of the 4AD noise-pop band Serena-Maneesh – have a steady supply of artfully grilled comestibles.

"You guys must be doing something right," says Michele to Lindstrøm and Nikolaisen, who've been staying with the Rundgrens all week. After all, her husband famously took studio solipsism to new heights on 1972 double-album *Something/Anything?*, and recorded his three most recent albums alone in an upstairs room at the house, singing, playing and recording virtually every note himself.

"He doesn't usually invite other musicians here," she adds. "And he has never worked on an album like this with anyone before."

In May, after three years of live sessions, Skype encounters and e-mailed files, Rundgren and his young Norwegian collaborators will issue *Runddans*, a swirling, shimmering synth cycle with a spiritual quality that evokes his most questing work, particularly the dense, intense primitive electronica of 1975's *Initiation*.

Runddans is a smorgasbord of arpeggiated monophonic '70s synths and high-frequency guitar and keyboard sonics bearing titles such as Liquid Joy From The Womb Of Infinity and T.H.E. Golden Triangle (Dry Mouthed Gargoyles In A Fountain of Fluorescent Shepard Tones).

An extreme remove it may be from his early '70s pop hits, it is, nevertheless, as beautiful as anything he has done since 1978's *Hermit Of Mink Hollow*.

Before that, however, Rundgren will issue *Global*, his 25th album (38th if you count his three releases with late-'60s Anglophiles Nazz and 10 with '70s prog rockers Utopia). A sparkling collection of popped-up EDM and electronic balladry addressing the ills of the planet, *Global* evinces the sort of songwriting smarts that prove the man's muse didn't go AWOL in the '80s.

A near-simultaneous release of two brand new albums would be unwise for any musician, let alone one of Todd's vintage. But it is entirely in keeping with the idiosyncratic, terminally restless Rundgren, who is currently working on an album with rap outfit The Roots as well as a musical based on 1977's *Bat Out Of Hell*, the 43 million-selling behemoth that he produced. It is also exactly what the faithful would wish for from their obdurate, chameleonic hero.

"I've always depended on the audience's curiosity," says Rundgren, taking a BBQ break. Although his voice is deep and slow, clear and precise, he speaks in a manner suggestive of permanent amusement. "It's that 'what'll he do next?' thing, in the way that people used to wait for the next Beatles album: 'What'll they do now? What kind of music will it be? Because it's going to be different from the last one.'"

Asked why the changes between his albums have been so dramatic, he roars with laughter. "Well," he says, taking a drag on a pot-enhanced e-cigarette, "that's a testament to what drugs can do."

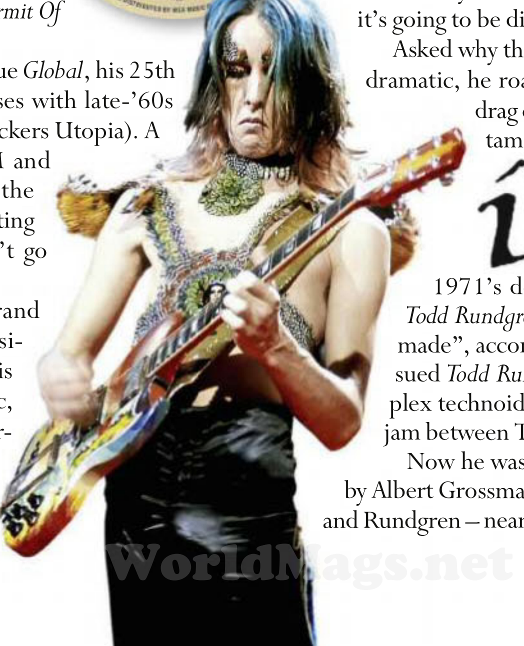
IN FEBRUARY 1975, TODD RUNDGREN was a long way from pop hits such as I Saw The Light and Hello It's Me and 1971's descriptively titled LP, *Runt. The Ballad Of Todd Rundgren* ("The best album Paul McCartney never made", according to Rolling Stone). He had recently issued *Todd Rundgren's Utopia*, 58 minutes of super-complex technoid prog-funk that was like some outer-space jam between The Mahavishnu Orchestra and Parliament.

Now he was holed up in Bearsville – the studio owned by Albert Grossman, the manager of Bob Dylan and The Band and Rundgren – near his home in Woodstock, upstate New York,

Runt
Todd Rundgren
Something/Anything?
Todd
A Wizard A True Star
todd rundgren
initiation

Aloha, It's Me: Todd, with below, right, his wife Michele, relaxes at his Princeville home, January 28, 2015; (below, left) on NBC's Midnight Special in 1973.

45 RPM
TODD RUNDGREN
HELLO IT'S ME



Piper Ferguson (4), Getty Images

"I COULD HAVE BECOME SYD BARRETT OR BRIAN WILSON – AN ACID CASUALTY – IF I'D WANTED TO."

poring over *Initiation*, the longest album made up to that point. The six harmonically adventurous but relatively conventional pop, rock and soul songs on side one offered some hope to those who feared Rundgren had lost his way on 1973's stream-of-consciousness trip *A Wizard, A True Star* and 1974's double-LP opus *Todd*.

Side two's A Treatise On Cosmic Fire, however, was a 36-minute barrage of electro-noise, made using state-of-the-art hardware amassed by Rundgren and his latest Utopian recruit, Robert Moog protégé Roger Powell. The result of Todd's explorations of religion, philosophy and consciousness, and exposure to Alice A. Bailey's metaphysical tome of the same name, A Treatise also reflected Todd's new drug-induced mental state.

"I could have become Syd Barrett or Brian Wilson – an acid casualty – if I'd chosen to," Rundgren told me in 1999. "If I'd allowed my fascination and fixation with the illusory nature of reality to completely take over."

Surveying that tumultuous phase today, Rundgren can see clearly how all this happened.

"Between *Something/Anything?* and *A Wizard, A True Star* I took acid and everything changed," he confesses.

We have sought refuge from the midday heat in his bedroom, an endearing shambles of boys' toys and female bric-a-brac.

"Don't tell Michele you came up here," he requests, "because it's not very neat."

Sitting amid the student-pad chaos, with his dye-streaked hair, black hoodie and baggy khaki shorts, Rundgren looks more like a well-preserved fortysomething hipster than a musician who made his first album in 1968.

"There was a lot of stuff floating around," he explains, "like synthetic mescaline or psilocybin, active ingredients in mushrooms. I took a couple of trips before I did [*A Wizard*…] and they had a pretty profound effect. I didn't want to jump off the roof and commit suicide but my world view permanently changed. I'd be walking down the street and it would be like the buildings were falling on you."

After 1973, Rundgren got off the synthetic drugs.

"I didn't trust them," he continues. "I was still smoking pot all the time – I still do. Then I got hold of a shoebox full of peyote buttons. I was on mescaline for a month straight. I'd take three [buttons] in the morning: I could really regulate it, and get to the place I wanted to be, which was about six feet over everybody else! The idea was for me to be productive at the same time. So I'd be doing gigs, rehearsals, writing in the studio… I was completely functional the entire time."

Perhaps inevitably, Rundgren found the musical, spiritual and ➢

Runddans society: (from left) Hans-Peter Lindstrøm, Todd and Emil Nikolaisen reach for infinity; (below) Rundgren with Meat Loaf and Bebe Buell.

Meat Loaf
BAT OUT OF HELL
SONGS BY JIM STEINMAN

◄ pharmacological rigours of 1974-75 unduly challenging.

"It's impossible to keep that level of concentration and intensity going," he admits. "I had to constantly readjust to the changes that had been made and figure out how to fit things into those changes."

His next two albums were consolidations, allowing him to breathe. 1976's *Faithful* featured one side of cover versions – of The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Yardbirds, Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix tunes that turned the teenage Todd's head back in '66, while *Hermit Of Mink Hollow* was the closest he has ever come to a *Blood On The Tracks*, all heavenly melodies and heartache, recorded in the aftermath of his break-up with Bebe Buell.

"I'M NOT THINKING ABOUT WHAT THE FANS WANT. I EXPECT THEM TO SWALLOW IT ALL."

But what began as delightful eclecticism and impressive polymathery eventually made him tough to market, an artist who never quite delivered on his early commercial promise. "I can understand," he replies, with a knowing, toothy grin. "I certainly got enough grief from the record label about it."

In a sense, he was the American Bowie: both pale and thin, with multicoloured barnet and alien, androgynous aura. They both worked with Hunt and Tony Sales (Todd on 1970's *Runt*, Bowie in Tin Machine), underwent exhausting transformations, issued albums of '60s covers (*Faithful*/*Pin-Ups*), (re-)discovered R&B (Todd on *A Wizard…*, Bowie on *Young Americans*), and in '73 they both produced early punk albums (respectively, New York Dolls' debut and *Raw Power*). And they both courted Bebe Buell. Arguably, Todd's journey, from *Runt* to *Initiation*, broke more ground, more rapidly. Although flattered by the comparison, Rundgren can spot the differences a mile off.

TODD RUNDGREN
EMIL NIKOLAISEN
HANS-PETER LINDSTRØM
RUNDDANS

"He likes to be a mystery to people," Todd says of Bowie. "In order to pull that off you can't share any of your real self. You can't have the relationship with your fans that I have. You have to be this kind of old school star, somewhat aloof and above the rest of humanity."

As with Bowie, the '80s were a testing time for Rundgren. There was a break-in at his Woodstock home; it also emerged that John Lennon's killer Mark Chapman was obsessed with Rundgren and had attempted to find him before murdering the ex-Beatle, events which prompted 1981's quasi-ambient *Healing*. Although the '80s saw few signs of commercial life – Bang The Drum All Day, from 1982's *The Ever Popular Tortured Artist Effect*, was a sports stadium hit – artistically 1985's *A Cappella* predated Björk's *Medúlla* by nine years while 1989's *Nearly Human* showed he could craft an exquisite white soul album at the drop of a hi-hat.

The '90s saw Todd experimenting with new media and technology. He moved to the Bay Area and briefly rebranded himself as TR-i (Todd Rundgren Interactive). Then, in 1996, he and his family (he has two children with ex-partner Karen Darvin, and one with Michele) relocated to Hawaii. It worked: he has made six albums in the last eight years alone.

His house is an endless source of inspiration. Designed by Todd, it doesn't have a back wall, which means the entire ground floor – the open-plan kitchen, diner and lounge – is open to the elements: in a storm, the Rundgrens have to strap everything down, including their couch and TV. It is also open to uninvited guests, a brave, or maybe fool-hardy, position considering Rundgren's fan history. Only last year a woman turned up at the house with a removals' van, instructing the driver to remove Michele's belongings and replace them all with her stuff, because, as she declared, she was his wife now. Bizarrely, the woman is still at large, not visiting but working in Kauai. For Rundgren, such unwarranted attention goes with the territory. "It's dangerous to idolise people, because you're likely substituting things you want for things they have," he shrugs. "You pretend they're more ideal than they are."

Long before punk, Rundgren dismantled the barrier between star and audience, asking fans for their autographs at gigs, while 1974's *Todd* contained a computerised image of the singer composed of thousands of names sent in with postcards given away free with *A Wizard, A True Star*.

He's still at it. In 2008, Rundgren celebrated his 60th birthday with a week-long fan gathering in his Kauai garden; "Toddstock II v6.5" took place in 2013, at Nottoway Plantation in White Castle, Louisiana. He knows the value, if not the perils, of a close relationship with his followers.

"There are certain people who come in agog and won't stop talking to you, but after a while they calm down," he remarks of these

Piper Ferguson, Getty Images (2), Rex

mini-festivals. "The fans have this self-levelling thing: they take care of themselves if you empower them to; they take the crazy ones aside 'til they calm down."

He also acknowledges the financial debt he owes these fans. "Without them," he admits, "I'm screwed. That's a good reason to stay humble." What's more, he says, "It's important to understand the human animal if you're going to write about them all the time. People have always said what they like about my music is that I articulate things that have never been articulated. Like, 'Yes! That's what I've always felt.' That's one of the signs that makes them fans, because they think I'm doing their thinking for them."

Unfortunately, this was the problem with Mark Chapman – an excess of identification with his idol. "Yeah," he chuckles, warily, "that is an unfortunate side effect…"

APPARENTLY, TODD RUNDGREN HAS NEVER HELD a playback before. The arch technocrat is in his lounge, treating everyone to an impromptu run-through of *Global*. The dodgy Soundbar speaker attached to the TV rattles under the pressure of *Global*'s Guetta-fied dance pop, frequently requiring prodding and banging. After the mellifluous blue-eyed soul of Soothe, Rundgren looks up from his couch and, taking another drag from his dope-strengthened e-fag, shouts, "Fuck you, Sam Smith!" Cue applause.

He exhales. It has been a good year so far. In the wake of *Global* comes *Runddans*. It took two young Norwegian Todd-freaks to take Rundgren back to the future, in the same way Daft Punk teased out Nile Rodgers's Chic-ness for 2013's Get Lucky.

"Me and Emil love *Initiation*," says Lindstrøm, and *Runddans* – an homage to an artist that involves the artist being homaged – has enough '70s period details to send fans into raptures.

"There are so many hidden meanings, messages and meta-hints to Todd fans," says Lindstrøm. "The stuff we've done here is really serious and deep."

Nikolaisen – whose responsibility was to knock the hours of material into shape – is equally happy with the result.

"I'd like to think we brought something out of Todd that we really love from way back," says the multi-instrumentalist and producer. The album title, he explains, means "round dance" in Norwegian, and refers to the cyclical nature of the album's central chord progression, while also, fortuitously, alluding to the surname of its creator.

"It was a strange coincidence," says Nikolaisen. "But it led to something truly beautiful. This is an homage to the sense of adventure and pure progress of [Rundgren's mid-'70s] but it's also a record of our time. I'm very proud of it – my life has been changed more than a little by this."

"It's funny," says Rundgren, remembering his mid-'70s output, "because when I was doing that stuff, it wasn't meant to be redolent of anything else – I was trying to destroy conventions."

Mellowed by the medicated vapes, he explains that the intention, without exception, was always to please himself. "While the [recording] is going on I'm not thinking about what the fans would or wouldn't like," he says. "Michele, after she heard *Global* for the first time, started saying things like, 'Oh, the fans will love this or that.' But I never pay attention to that. I expect them to swallow it all (*mimes child gagging on medicine*): 'Don't make a face! Open wide!'"

Rundgren, lest we forget, could have been a contender; the true star who chose inconstancy and wizardry. He tells MOJO about his first royalty cheque, for Bat Out Of Hell: $700,000.

"That was an incredible payday," he says. "I didn't even know such a thing was possible. But it didn't cause a desire to hold any more cheques like that."

He insists that he has never been tempted to make any commercial moves, saying, "I wouldn't know what 'commercial' is. I don't like what's on the radio, so how would I make myself do that? At a certain point in my recording career, I told myself that I didn't have any higher purpose than to try and create whatever wasn't being created anywhere else. If I was simply going to do whatever anyone else did, then I really had no purpose. There were people who cared more than I did to write the perfect AM radio single. That was just one genre of music, one that I didn't want to become a slave to."

Having completed *Global* and *Runddans*, he's looking forward to his collaboration with The Roots, his role as choral director for the *Bat Out Of Hell* stage show, and even a mooted Jersey Boys-style jukebox musical based on his diverse back catalogue. The part where they attempt to choreograph A Treatise On Cosmic Fire should be hilarious. And he says his next solo record "will be different again". As we prepare to leave Todd HQ, Rundgren presents MOJO with a bag of organic breakfast cereal, a parting gift from his hospitable wife.

"That's part of the fun," he says. "I never wanted to get bored; I still don't. I have to have new options and new possibilities." Ⓜ

Runddans by Todd Rundgren/Emil Nikolaisen/Lindstrøm is released by Smalltown Supersound on May 4.

FOR THE LOVE OF TODD

Paul Lester lists a dozen recent converts to that real Rundgren richness

Earl Sweatshirt

In 2013, the Odd Future scallywag tweeted: "i got this here todd rundgren record im finna find me some food/kush and call it a sunday."

Tyler, The Creator

Meanwhile, the other OF *wunderkind* tweeted: "Whoa, I Just Listened To This Dude Named Todd Rundgren Or Something, And Fucking Got Damn. This Is Amazing. Reminds Me Of NERD."

J Dilla

The late sampladelic visionary based his track King on Intro – Prana from Rundgren's *Initiation*. He also sampled Mûlâdhâra: The Dance of Kundalini for his Track 14.

Trent Reznor

Rundgren was invited by Trent Reznor, a Toddhead, to rework All Time Low, from Nine Inch Nails' 2013 *Hesitation Marks*.

Hot Chip

Halfway through their 2008 single Shake A Fist, a voice says "Before we go any further I'd like to show you all a game I made up." That's Todd's Intro from side two of *Something/Anything?*

Tame Impala

Lonerism, the 2012 LP by the psych wizards of Oz, owed a debt to *A Wizard, A True Star*, and they added International Feel to their setlist. Rundgren remixed the single Elephant. See also Rundgren-esque Tame offshoot Pond's latest set, *Man, It Feels Like Space Again*.

Daft Punk

French duo's 2006 film Electroma lifted *A Wizard…* intro International Feel for its opening theme.

Charli XCX

The Icona Pop/Iggy Azalea songwriter heard hip hop producer Paul White's use, for his track So Far Away, of the epiphanal "I want to… change… the world" climax to 1974's An Elpee's Worth Of Toons and used it as the basis for her 2013 pop hit, also called So Far Away.

Neon Indian

Rundgren became chillwave's architect circa 2009-11 when the likes of Neon Indian (with the Izzat Love? -sampling Deadbeat Summer) and TV Girl (with Hello It's Me-filching If You Want It) turned Todd gold into summer-dazed, parallel reality radio hits.

Ty Dolla $ign

On 2013's Fuckin' Tonight the LA rapper incorporates a snippet of It Takes Two To Tango (This Is For The Girls) from *Something/Anything?* You can just hear Todd tut: "Don't you think of anything but sex?"

DāM-Funk

Self-styled Californian exponent of funkmospheric new-boogie has shared stages with everyone from Ariel Pink to Animal Collective, and recently collaborated with Snoop Dogg on the 7 Days Of Funk project. He asked to be Todd's 2015 on-tour DJ.

Rapsody

On Rock The Bells feat. Kendrick Lamar, the North Carolina rapper extemporises colourfully over Pulse from 1981's *Healing*. For further evidence that Todd's music finds favour with hip hoppers, see Madlib's use, on Drinks Up!, of Johnee Jingo from '85's *A Cappella*.

The house of Todd: (from top) Charli XCX, Trent Reznor and J Dilla give props.

God bless the child: Billie Holiday at her commercial peak in New York, 1947.

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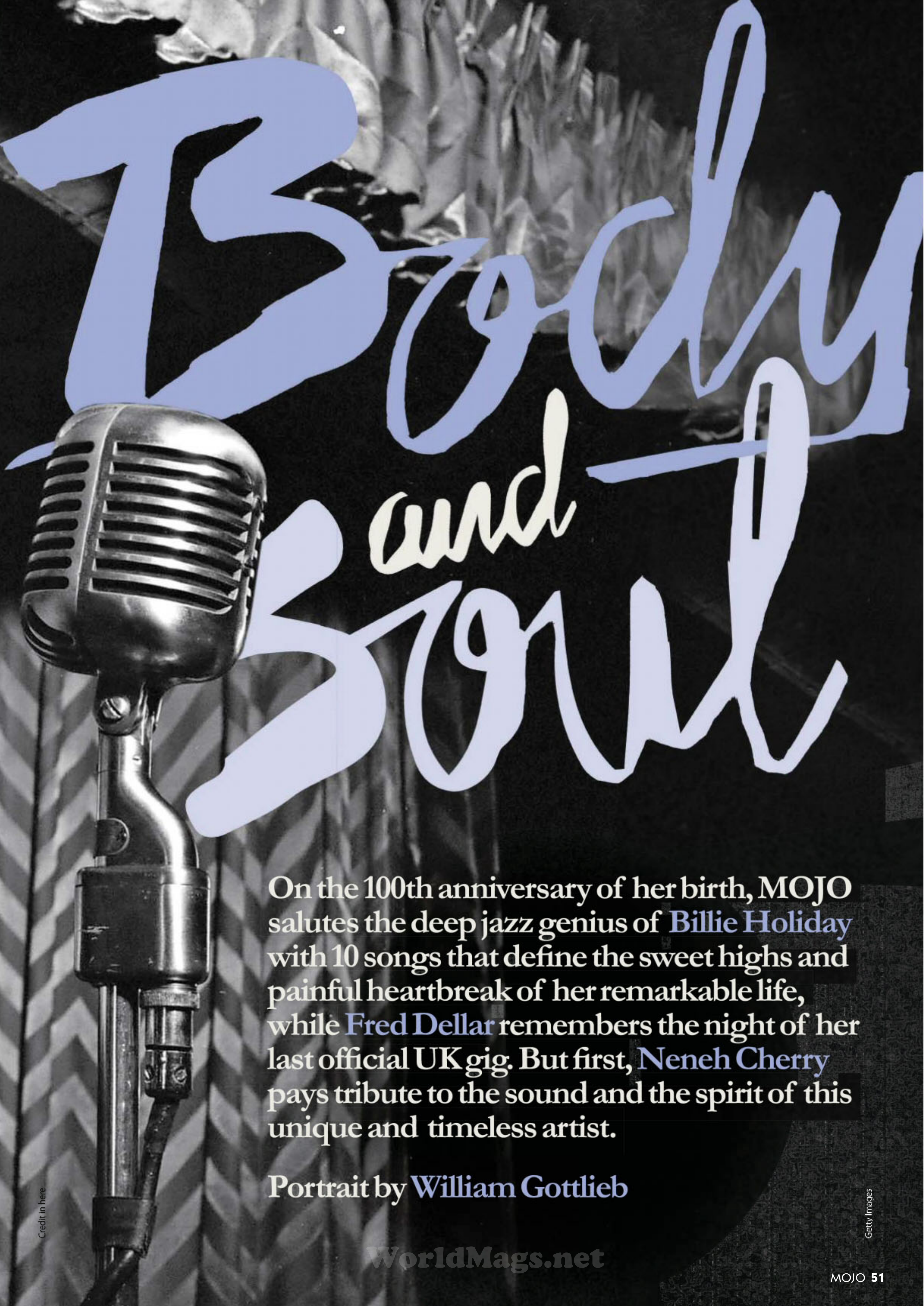


Body and Soul

On the 100th anniversary of her birth, MOJO salutes the deep jazz genius of **Billie Holiday** with 10 songs that define the sweet highs and painful heartbreak of her remarkable life, while **Fred Dellar** remembers the night of her last official UK gig. But first, **Neneh Cherry** pays tribute to the sound and the spirit of this unique and timeless artist.

Portrait by **William Gottlieb**

Credit in here

Getty Images

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN I FIRST HEARD Billie Holiday. It would have been before my memory begins, when I was still in the womb. One of my favourite stories about Billie Holiday is a family one. As a kid, my dad, Don Cherry, used to roller skate all over Los Angeles. Him and his best buddy would make their way down to a jazz club and stand out the back and watch the music through the slats in the windows. One of these times, Billie Holiday was playing there. Between sets she opened the back door and found Don and his friend there. She gave them some money and asked them to go buy her some candy at the store. Then she looked down at my dad and said, "You sure is skinny. If there's no bad luck, then there's no luck at all."

The sound of Billie Holiday singing has always felt like a part of me. I can't say that I just like her voice. That's not enough. She is all in her voice; her life, fragile, strong, timeless, whole, and bleeding at the same time. Billie Holiday once said that she wanted to sing like Louis Armstrong's playing, so sometimes I just listen to the sound of Billie's voice as an instrument.

Billie really played well with her musicians. She listened to them, and had a unique sense of timing and space. She didn't just sing her songs. She lived in them, told the stories, and brought them to life with her spirit. With great sensitivity, she always made others' songs her own.

Like the song Strange Fruit, one of the most powerful political anthems ever written. The fact that she sang this song gives us insight into her convictions and her purpose, but there is also the heartbreak at the core of her story, the world she was born into.

I'm not a specialist on her life. All I know is that she wore her heart on her sleeve. To me, that is the real beauty of the music, like life was making the most sense as she was singing. As she got older the hardships took their toll on her voice, she gave all of herself, everything she had, and I give thanks for all of it.

I've always felt that we owe so much to Billie Holiday and the great blues queens. They were the real pioneer feminists who paved many roads for us. They made anything possible. Don't forget, Bessie Smith had her own custom-built railroad car. They fought, they lived, they did it all and they sang their hearts out.

Billie had a hard life. Times were hard then for black people, for women, for artists. She was all of those things. Her story is deep and touching, and that lives on forever in her music. That was her gift to us. That is what's important. Billie Holiday's legacy goes on forever, whether we are emulating the young Billie or the old Billie is not the point, as long as we make it our own, and pay her the respect that the Lady Day is due.

Neneh Cherry

Neneh Cherry

All-star line-up: pianist Teddy Wilson with the Benny Goodman Orchestra, 1931; (insets left, from top) John Kirby, Roy Eldridge, Benny Goodman.

LADY SINGS THE BLUES

From joyful pop to agony and heartbreak, a life lived in 10 songs…

1 What A Little Moonlight Can Do

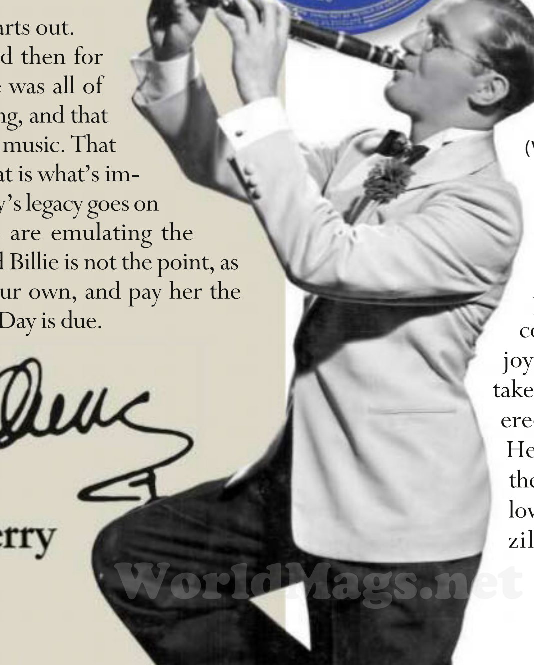
1
Brunswick
Made in United States of America
(B 17767)
Fox Trot
Vocal Chorus Billie Holiday
What A Little Moonlight Can Do
TEDDY WILSON and his ORCHESTRA
7498
Brunswick Record Corporation

(BRUNSWICK, 1935)

Not Billie's debut recording – she'd recorded Riffin' The Scotch with Benny Goodman in 1933 – this nevertheless was a joyous high-point in a session of four songs that really launched the New York-based singer's on-disc career. Credited to The Teddy Wilson Orchestra, a small, all-star group featuring pianist Wilson, Benny Goodman on clarinet, Roy Eldridge on trumpet, John Kirby on bass, John Trueheart on guitar and drummer Cozy Cole, this was just a pop song of the moment, stemming from the British film Roadhouse and aimed at the burgeoning jukebox trade by producer John Hammond. But the 20-year-old Billie, small-voiced, less intense than later, was already phrasing in an inimitable and unique fashion, and transformed the number into a memorable standard, one that would still form part of her performances many years later. *FD*

2 You Go To My Head

2
Full-Range Recording
Vocalion
(22021)
Fox Trot
Tempo
YOU GO TO MY HEAD
-Gillespie-Coots-
BILLIE HOLIDAY and her ORCHESTRA
4126



(VOCALION, 1938)

On May 11, 1938, Billie Holiday took a day off from touring with the Artie Shaw band to record this J Fred Coots and Haven Gillespie torch ballad with a six-piece pick-up band in New York. Her previous collaborator, Teddy Wilson, had already enjoyed a hit with Nan Wynn on their refined take; Billie would return with a more considered version under Norman Granz in 1952. Here though, she's abandoned to the thrill of the moment, living the narcotic rush of cursed love through her woozy slur. Cushioned by lazily eloquent horns and strolling ➢

Getty Images (5)

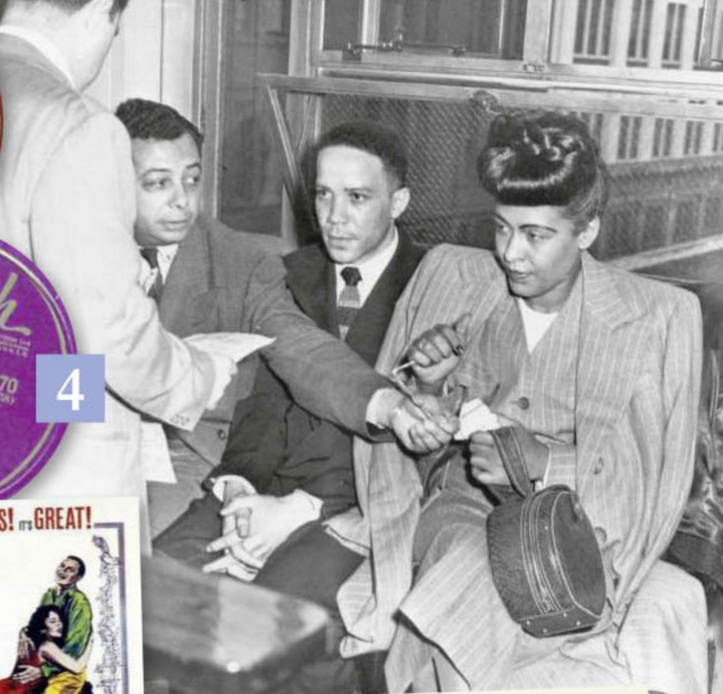
Nothing like it ever: Holiday in 1939, the year she first recorded Strange Fruit.

Fine And Mellow: Billie with Cozy Cole (drums) and James P Johnson (piano), shot by Gjon Mili for LIFE magazine.

"I copied my style from Louis Armstrong's West End Blues. I thought, This is wonderful!"

< piano, her elongation of the title refrain conveys joy, hope, pain, self-doubt. The effect is dizzying and yields the second of three Top 20 hits for her that year. *LW*

COMMODORE
CLASSICS IN SWING
STRANGE FRUIT
Billie Holiday and Her Orchestra
3



3 Strange Fruit

(COMMODORE, 1939)

Nothing like it ever. Haunts everyone who hears it. Haunted her the rest of her life. Communist teacher Abel Meeropol's lynching song came for her when she was 23 – a vibrant blue-jazz chantoozie who knew her every minute happened because-she-was-black. She'd never said it. The song said it. She sang it. For little Commodore because John Hammond and Columbia couldn't face it. The Café Society band's long mood-set found the heart; muted trumpet then piano just remembering for a while and, after 70 seconds, Billie… telling it. No histrionics despite the terror, just her honey voice dripping thick blood from every curdled syllable. "Pastoral scene… bulging eyes… twisted mouth… burning flesh… rot… here is a strange and bitter crop". See also the live video of 1959, shortly before she died – still all haunt. *PS*

OKeh
GOD BLESS THE CHILD
BILLIE HOLIDAY
6270
4

4 God Bless The Child

(OKEH, 1941)

Billie's fractious relationship with her mother reached breaking point when the older woman refused to lend her daughter money, despite being the regular recipient of Billie's post-success generosity. This frustrating situation fed into God Bless The Child, a jumbled piece of homespun philosophy about independence, survival of the fittest, the transient nature of money and the limitations of family ties. The song's gentle wisdom produced one of Billie's most touching performances and lauded compositions; except, she probably didn't write it. Co-writer Arthur Herzog remembers asking Billie for a down-home Southern expression around which to build a song. Using some of her melodic suggestions, Herzog said, "Billie, I'll give you half the song if you make the record." *CI*

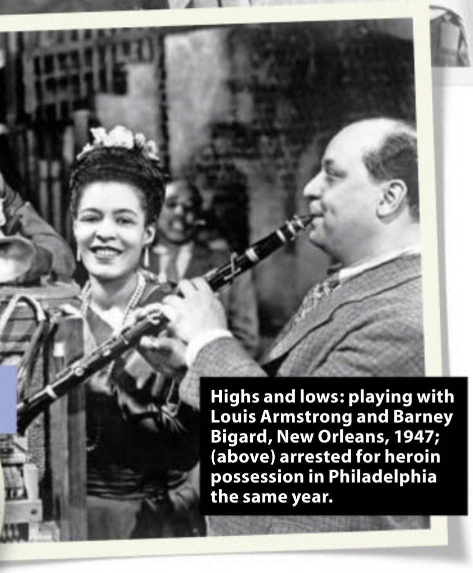
IT'S GERSHWIN! IT'S GLORIOUS! IT'S GREAT!
PORGY and BESS
OTTO PREMINGER

5
DECCA
45 RPM
PORGY
BILLIE HOLIDAY

5 Porgy

(DECCA, 1948)

By the '40s Decca had become one of the foremost labels in America, buoyed by multimillion releases from Bing Crosby, The Andrews Sisters, etc. Signing for the label in 1944 should have revived Billie's recording career – but in the wake of 1945's Lover Man her hits dried up, possibly due to lack of airplay caused by her increasingly bad reputation. Even so, her material from this period was of high quality, beautifully produced, and often featuring top arrangers like Gordon Jenkins or Toots Camarata. Porgy was an unlikely vehicle. Originally titled I Loves You, Porgy and a duet from George Gershwin's Porgy And Bess, Billie delivering the song in soft, resigned manner, with intimate backing from pianist Bobby Tucker's trio. Nina Simone said the interpretation was the reason she first loved Billie Holiday. *FD*



Highs and lows: playing with Louis Armstrong and Barney Bigard, New Orleans, 1947; (above) arrested for heroin possession in Philadelphia the same year.

DECCA
SAMPLE COPY: NOT FOR SALE
MY SWEET HUNK O' TRASH
BILLIE HOLIDAY And LOUIS ARMSTRONG
24785
6

6 My Sweet Hunk O' Trash

(DECCA, 1949)

Adolescent Billie earned cash by cleaning brothel stoops (and the wallets of unsuspecting johns) in Baltimore. One 'house' had a gramophone and she would spin 78s by her Jazz Age heroes: Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong. "I copied my style from Louis," she later noted. "I heard a record [he] made called West End Blues. He doesn't say any words and I thought, this is wonderful!" In 1947 she took a mostly-singing role in the Louis film New Orleans. After a year in prison for one of several dope busts, she recorded her only session with Satch in 1949, including this tongue-in-cheek sass contest, showing the wild wit of a torch singer known for gloomy Sundays. Controversially, Armstrong allegedly says, "Fuck 'em, baby" at 2:53. A re-record was ordered, but what sounds like the original is still available. *MS*

7
Billie Holiday

7 Love For Sale

(CLEF/VERVE, 1954)

Recorded late April, 1952, probably during her first session for Norman Granz, Love For Sale overtured Billie's final tragedy – correct usage: Aristotle would have acknowledged the "pity and awe" as she sang for everybody and hit the skids, her ➢

Granz for the arts: Norman at work, 1955.

Getty Images (4)

A FAREWELL TO LONDON

Billie Holiday's last official British gig was on February 14, 1954, at the Flamingo Club. Fred Dellar remembers a magical evening.

Vocalion. I loved that label. In the era of 78 rpm shellac singles, Vocalion both caught the eye and captured jazz hearts. It looked regal and it was regal. No doubt about that. For it featured early releases by Billie Holiday. I was just a kid, hardly into my teens. I couldn't afford to buy new records. I scoured junk-piles, accumulating a jazz collection for a few pence at a time. Hearing Billie's lemon-edged voice, effortlessly swinging, yet heart-searing on ballads, was a fantastic reward for spending time in rat-infested junkyards. I never fell out of love with her. Never.

Fast forward to early 1954. I was 23 then, a factory worker who had survived two years in the RAF and come out the other side, still jazz-crazy. The news on the grapevine was that Billie Holiday was to play a club gig at The Flamingo, in the Mapleton Restaurant, just off Leicester Square, after her appearance with the Jack Parnell band at the Royal Albert Hall.

The Flamingo was London's jazz Valhalla, launched by Jeff Kruger in August 1952. On the first day, a 400-strong queue formed early for the opening. A squad of police was drafted in to keep order before the first band appeared, four hours later. There'd been trouble there initially. But it was soon sorted out. Kruger's father had been East End gangster Jack Spot's barber. When a number of handbag thefts threatened the club, some friendly villains sorted things out.

"The local Charing Cross hospital had a spate of broken fingers to heal," Kruger would later confide to me.

It was on St Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14, 1954 that my girlfriend Pam and I caught the tube to Leicester Square and headed into the Flamingo. It was overcrowded from the start. It seemed that every jazz musician in London was in the place.

"Look, there's Ray Ellington over there," observed Pam as we waited for Billie to arrive from the Albert. At ten o'clock we were still waiting. Eventually and unbelievably, it happened.

Billie Holiday was on-stage. Her pianist Carl Drinkard played a lead-in, the club's regular rhythm section – drummer Tony Kinsey plus bassist Sammy Stokes – moved into action and Billie was suddenly in incomparable flight. I can't recall what she sang that night, just that she was there. I somehow clambered onto a chair and two girls (neither of which was Pam) clung on to either side of me. Sax-player Don Weller, whom Billie had invited to the Flamingo, tried desperately to reach the stage but was unable to make his way through the crowd and settled for a later drink with Billie in the band room. Somewhere, Jeff Kruger was smiling in the background.

"Everyone warned me that Billie was a drug addict but her manager, Joe Glaser, swore to me that she was clean," Kruger mused later. "'However,' said Glaser, 'She's a kind of nervous lady and prone to take a drink. That's the stuff you gotta watch.'"

Billie had played concerts in Manchester and Nottingham, prior to her two London dates. En route to the first show – at Manchester – Billie took a comfort stop at a transport cafe. "When she came out of the Ladies to rejoin us," remembered Kruger, "she was staggering. She'd been drinking. But where was she getting it from? She didn't even take her handbag in with her. She had no drinks in her purse or travelling bag. However, she did carry an inordinate number of small perfume bottles and it was in these that we found her drink."

In incomparable flight: Holiday on-stage in London, February 14, 1954; (top right) the Flamingo announcement.

Billie had enjoyed a whisky or two prior to her set at the Flamingo and was singing as though inspired. Time has dimmed my memory of everything except that she was superb. Jack Parnell, the drummer who'd led the big band at the Albert Hall recalls that while Billie looked like a sack of old clothes at rehearsals, by the end of the evening she looked like a girl of 18.

"She was thrilled that we had given her a suite at a hotel," said Jeff Kruger. "She was used to being shoved into third-rate rooms on the road. At Manchester, her [future] husband, the brutish [Louis] McKay was there, a man who had endearing habits like hitting his wife when the mood took him. When she needed him, more often than not he'd be out spending her money, usually on seducing other women. Little wonder that Billie turned to drink for consolation. Indeed, as I looked past McKay, I could see she was already out of her skull. Her slurred words came through a fog of alcohol."

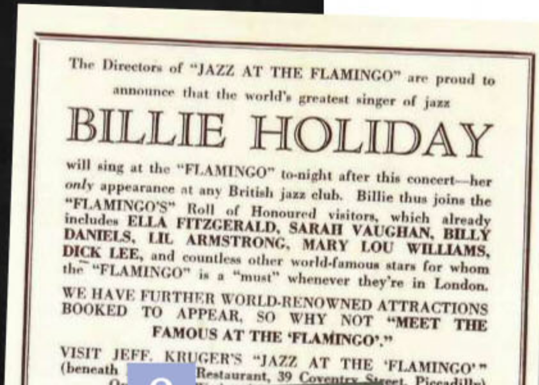
"Listen honey," Billie told Kruger, "when it's show time, you just take me out to that microphone. Put my left hand on the mike, open the curtain and I'll go. When you want me to finish, after an hour or whatever, just shut the curtains and come and get me. I won't disgrace you."

Billie was as good as her word. "She did 50 minutes," said Kruger, "sang like a bird, never missed a note – though she was roaring drunk."

At the Flamingo, she turned on the magic yet again. "No artist in the world would have wanted to follow Billie Holiday on the stage that night," said Kruger. Respected jazz critic Max Jones added that, "those present were fortunate to hear Lady Day at her exquisite best."

As one of those fortunate souls and a Billie-believer of long standing, I can only concur. There are moments in life when something happens, moments so magical you know they can never, never be repeated. That night at the Flamingo, at the conclusion of her only British tour, Billie Holiday delivered such a moment.

> "No one would have wanted to follow Billie on-stage that night."



The Directors of "JAZZ AT THE FLAMINGO" are proud to announce that the world's greatest singer of jazz

BILLIE HOLIDAY

will sing at the "FLAMINGO" to-night after this concert—her *only* appearance at any British jazz club. Billie thus joins the "FLAMINGO'S" Roll of Honoured visitors, which already includes **ELLA FITZGERALD, SARAH VAUGHAN, BILLY DANIELS, LIL ARMSTRONG, MARY LOU WILLIAMS, DICK LEE,** and countless other world-famous stars for whom the "FLAMINGO" is a "must" whenever they're in London.

WE HAVE FURTHER WORLD-RENOWNED ATTRACTIONS BOOKED TO APPEAR, SO WHY NOT **"MEET THE FAMOUS AT THE 'FLAMINGO'."**

VISIT JEFF. KRUGER'S "JAZZ AT THE 'FLAMINGO'"
(beneath Restaurant, 39 Coventry Street, Piccadilly)
11 p.m.
ZZ CLUB

8
THE ESSENTIAL BILLIE HOLIDAY
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT RECORDED LIVE

≺ power unvanquished except by death. The track declares her '40s 'pop' period over, setting her slur-and-veer vocal against a lone piano – Oscar Peterson playing with a near-classical formality, which works by ignoring her. Cole Porter wrote the song; Billie lived it as a teenage hooker. But she keeps her cool, her self-possession, to insinuate the brutal truths she knows: "Appetising young love for sale/Love that's fresh and still unspoiled/Love that's only slightly soiled..." *PS*

8 Don't Explain

(VERVE, 1957)

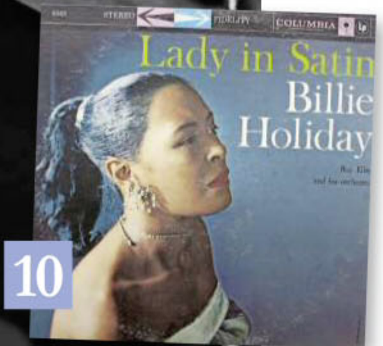
Like another Holiday favourite, My Man, Don't Explain has a disturbing power. Co-authored by Billie with Arthur Herzog, the song is a moving portrayal of the kind of emotional dependency which Billie often suffered from ("You're my joy and pain," she sings, helplessly, "I'm so completely yours") and exudes a poignant, painful authenticity. Though ostensibly inspired by husband Jimmy Monroe's infidelities, the song's acceptance of betrayal also speaks of Billie's life-long attitude to romance. The 1945 recording with Toots Camarata's lush strings underlines Billie's vulnerability, but the starker 1957 Carnegie Hall version at a book-promoting concert designed to underline the autobiographical aspects of her music finds the singer at her most vivid and emotionally revealed. *CI*

9 Fine And Mellow

(THE SOUND OF JAZZ TV SHOW, 1957)

TV times: Billie on The Sound Of Jazz, 1957.

The producers of this TV special captured various performances with integrity and minimal pretension – qualities Holiday owned for a lifetime. In her segment, she sang her composition Fine And Mellow, a straight blues and setlist regular. Joining her was a jazz super-session: Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Roy Eldridge and others. But her true co-star was old pal, fellow Count Basie alumnus and tenor legend Lester Young. He'd named her Lady Day, she'd dubbed him Prez – for President. Although sick with alcoholism, when Prez – the only horn-man seated – stood to solo he blew a chorus that wafted like a low, sad moan over the studio. Lady gave with a knowing, high-beam smile, as the crew in the control room quietly wept. *MS*



10 I'm A Fool To Want You

(COLUMBIA, 1958)

February 20, 1958, with arranger/conductor Ray Ellis, a 40-piece orchestra and a water pitcher of vodka, Billie Holiday stares into the abyss on a cover of the Sinatra song which becomes the opening track on *Lady In Satin*, her penultimate album. Her trebly quaver, vitiated from years of abuse and mainlined to her soul, captures the agony and loneliness of a life of unrequited love, in its resigned, broken tone. Framed by muted horns and strings that rise then fall then rise again – as if atuned to her papery breathing – the depth of emotion and self-knowledge are palpable when she whisper-croaks, "Take me back, I love you." In just 17 months' time she'll be gone. *LW*

Compiled and written by Fred Dellar, Chris Ingham, Michael Simmons, Phil Sutcliffe and Lois Wilson

Getty Images

Diary of a

rock'n'roll star part two

Ian Hunter contemplates the glory of Mount Fuji, January 19, 2015. "No photograph will ever do it justice," he writes.

3F
カフ
ラッキー
B1

In 1972 ian hunter's Diary Of A Rock'n'Roll Star, one of the greatest rock memoirs of all time, presented readers with a unique insider's view of Mott The Hoople's US tour. Over four decades later, Ian played in Japan for the first time in his career and MOJO asked him whether he would document this new touring experience…

Photography: ross halfin.

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2015

We flew to San Francisco last Thursday and – pampered ourselves at the Phoenix Hotel on Polk'n'Eddy. Friday evening we had a great gig at the Fillmore – the night they shut the Golden Gate Bridge down for the first time in 72 years! I remember Chuck Prophet played a mean guitar during the encores and Steve Wynn and Scott McCaughey (R.E.M.) helped out on 'Dudes'. Got to bed around 1:00 and up at 7:30 – flew down to LA; the van has to go back and that takes time and a lot of hangin' around. I managed an hour's kip in the afternoon then over to the Roxy for a sold out lot of fun. Yesterday was San Juan Capistrano – we were all pretty knackered, but we held up well and the audience took off. Great gig.

Today's Monday and I'm in the first class lounge waiting for the 11:30 to Tokyo. If you have extra bags in economy it's $100 for the next piece; if you have an extra bag in first – it's $200 an extra piece. ANA [All Nippon Airways] is the airline and I have to say, this makes sense. The flight's 12 and a half hours and Dennis DiBrizzi, our keyboard player, hates it already! Fair few musicians turning up at gigs these days. It's nice meeting people you've only heard of. The ships are still passing.

So, I've had a couple of champers (as you do) and I'm sitting in Business 14K. Stewardess really sweet, she says it's 10 and a half hours not 12 and a half, so I'm suitably delighted. A drop more is in order. This is the longest I've been on a plane – might as well give up and enjoy it. I've got a few downers, so I pop a half and sleep for four hours. Flight is half empty in here. Let's see – Mr. Bean's Holiday – nah. When I resurface, I find the American House Of Cards. Haven't watched this as I loved the original. Must have watched six of those.

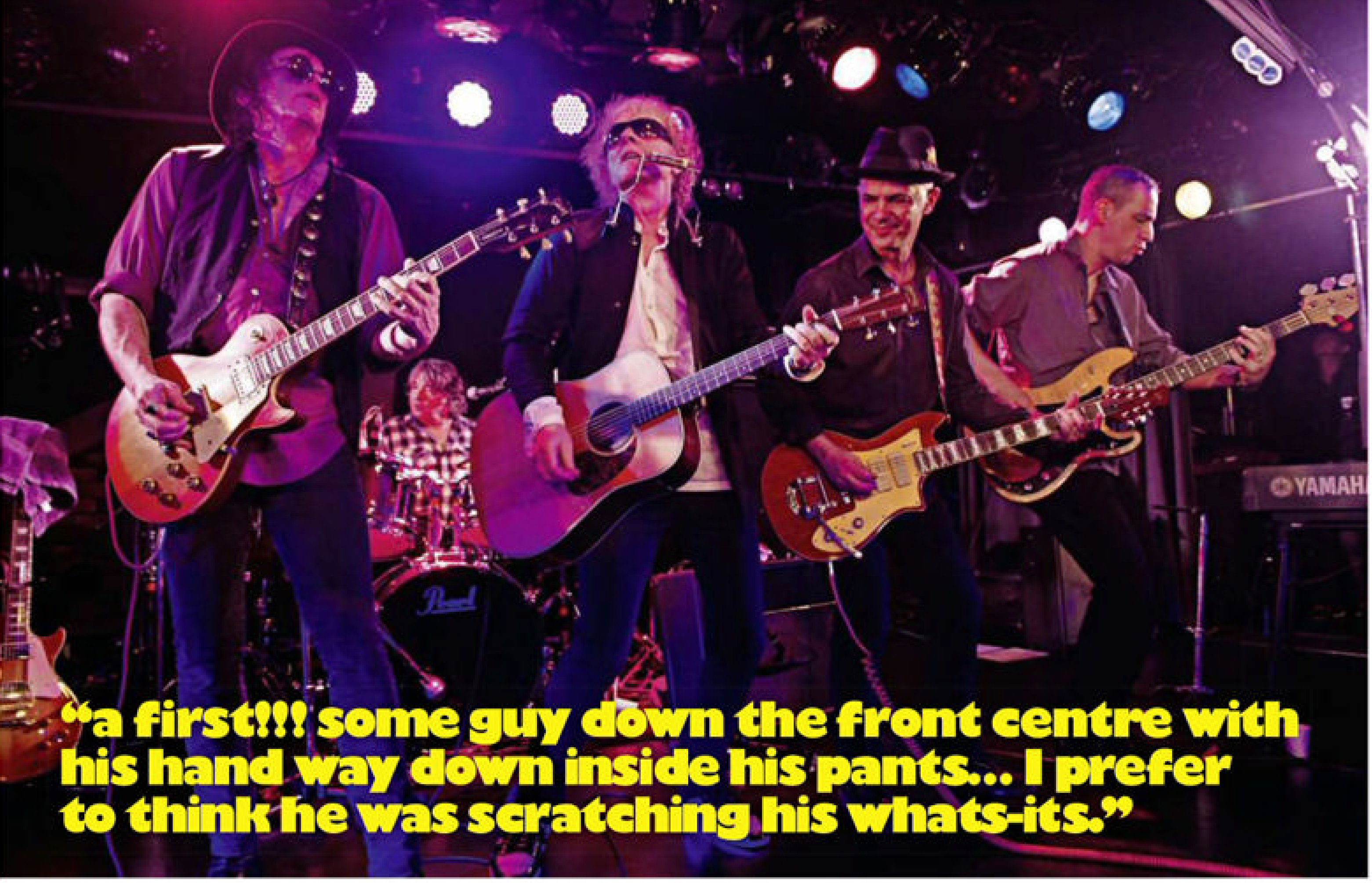
Actually, I'm quite up about this whole little adventure. Never been to Japan (everybody else I know has). Our drummer, Steve Holley, was part of that whole McCartney fiasco. First they wanted two shows a night – I said no. Then it was moving round Japan and I said no again. Then came the actual offers – I said no. So, finally after three years of piddling about it got sorted – three shows in Tokyo. The band's in great shape – we just did 37 gigs so it should be fun. The band consists of James Mastro; basically, we're all in James's band. He's a great organiser, so I get to be feeble and loiter while he takes care of the A's to B's. My wife, Trudi, handles the finances and travel. We're lean and mean! Steve Holley has been with me since before we were born. He talks too much, but plays behind and that suits me good – better than ever these days. Mark Bosch is the guitar player and a fine one at that – if he can keep off the sauce. It's difficult on the road; there's so much of it about. He's prone to the original rock'n'roll experience – knows food – he can surprise and be exciting. Paul Page said he waited 17 years to get this gig – poor devil! I'm a Paul fan; solid as a rock. Holley's favourite bass player – and I hear subtle improvements at the back all the time. People respond to Paul – he's got that NY 'connected' thing going on. DiBrizzi? What a strange kettle of fish this guy is – hilarious impressions of everybody and zero tolerance for anybody. Knows how to rock on a keyboard. Apparently, when James talked to him about working for me, Dennis said, "Does he know what I'm like?" I do now – great fit! It's a nice balance – James, Paul and Dennis are very responsible people, so me and Boschy get to be retarded. (Steve's a bit of both.) Everybody gets on everybody's nerves (at times), but they all respect each other and I think it shows on stage.

Looking forward to seeing Morgan Fisher, an old Mott The Hoople compadre. Morgan's great at the pompous English Gentleman bit and I like that in a chap. I got him the job with Queen way back when, but they sacked him when he innocently inquired as to the whereabouts of his limo. We all have our little blank spots.

I get a USA Today; it's a Monday and a two year old could do these crossword puzzles. There's a special Golden Globe section – women dressed up to look like lobsters – is this disgusting or is it just me? The world unites in Paris! REAL people? They're usually quiet, but sometimes they surface (like when Obama runs) and it's great to see. I find freedom infinitely preferable to delinquency. Letter to The Pentagon: make self-destructive weapons so nobody else can use them when they get lost.

They gave me Charles de Cazanove Brut Tête de Cuvée, beef steak (Yuzu-citron flavour with Takahata wine sauce) and a cheese plate. Bit different from the old days! I know – ➢

Ross Halfin, Alamy



"a first!!! some guy down the front centre with his hand way down inside his pants... I prefer to think he was scratching his whats-its."

< it all sounds disgusting, but I have to do it once in a while. Hey, my pants still fit and I bought them in Trash'n'Vaudeville in 1984!! If you've ever seen me, I've been wearing those same pants for 31 years (I do have two pairs, admittedly). That's what I call value. Sometimes, it's a bit of a squeeze going up the steps, though!

What with House Of Cards and Veep – it doesn't inspire too much confidence, does it? S'all money these days.

LAND!! Touchdown! All very clean in the airport and everybody clears immigration and customs and they're there to meet us with a couple of vans. Having come into Narita Airport, we're still over 60km from Tokyo, so we'll be there just in time for the rush hour traffic. Brill. Can't see much most of the way into the city. They've got high baffle walls – the roads are like new. Tokyo's kind of like Gotham. Thousands upon thousands of skyscrapers – roads seem to wind around them – the only thing missing are flying cars. We're in this hotel for one night only as we came in a day early. Just as well, you couldn't swing a kitten. Promoter says we move to 'The Prince' tomorrow at 11am. We're beat. James and [his wife] Meahgan, Trudi and I look for a local eatery and find a funky little wooden bar that has egg and bacon curry (can you believe that?). That's it for me. They understand the word 'pitcher' which is forthcoming and most enjoyable. Kirin seems to be the local lager. Tokyo reminds me of Hamburg in the '60s – chock full of life – neon forever – and masses of people. And so to bed.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015

9am and the band is downstairs scoffing Japanese breakfast. I've decided on ice cream; it's a bit early, but it looks good. Cold and brisk outside, low 50s. Just heard from this chap Dave Dufort; haven't seen him since 1967 when Miller Anderson and I were trying to get something going. Dave lives here – I'll drop him an email – nice to catch up.

Ross Halfin and his assistant, Kaz, roll into town from London. Ross is the photographer who takes all those fabulous photos of very famous rock stars – and sometimes me. He says, "Check this out" and we're off to a record warehouse. Apparently, they turn a blind eye to piracy here. We go up the elevator into an Aladdin's cave of bootlegs. For some reason I can have whatever I want for nothing, so Trudi's filling up with rare Faces and Stones – eventually they scrape up some Mott stuff and even one or two of mine. Cheeky sods. Mastro would love this place. James and Meaghan have gone to the Palace, but Ross says you can't go in, you can only walk around outside it. At 4pm we split up and agree to meet again at 7 for dinner. Ross knows Tokyo and Kaz speaks Japanese – every bit helps. I'm told you rarely hear a Japanese person say, 'no' – they simply say nothing – quite polite. Ross tells me MOJO want a piece for my 30-CD box set Proper are distributing, so I guess I can give them this as I've already started doing it!

Boschy rings up and says a fan gave him a bottle of 2004 Dom Perignon, and he brings me up a glassful. We're now in the Prince Hotel and I just met three fans hanging about in the foyer. They have a load of vinyl and seem genuine. Two spoke good English and promised not to divulge my whereabouts! Nice hotel – 25th floor, view staggering – nothing but skyscrapers as far as the eye can see. I've been in a fair few cities, but this place is a sight to behold – and it feels pretty safe on the street. I'm told they don't nick stuff; pretty honest in general. Ross says we can get a car and driver for about 500 quid to take us to Mount Fuji on Monday to do a photo shoot. Sounds good – we'll have done three shows in a row by then and a van ride won't take too much effort. We go back to NYC on Tuesday. Ross goes back to London on Tuesday, then to Rio for the Foo Fighters on the Wednesday. Nori turns up to help Ross out. He's a friend of Ross's who had a fireworks accident and lost a hand, an eye and the hearing in one ear. Lovely guy.

It's expensive here.

Sumo on the TV. They squat – they slap themselves – glare at teach other – one walks off – comes back – they squat again – slap – and go for it. Enormous mounds of pimply flesh – huge tits – wobbly bums – all very serious – almost religious. The winner gives the loser a cup of tea and a napkin. This can't be healthy, but what sport is?

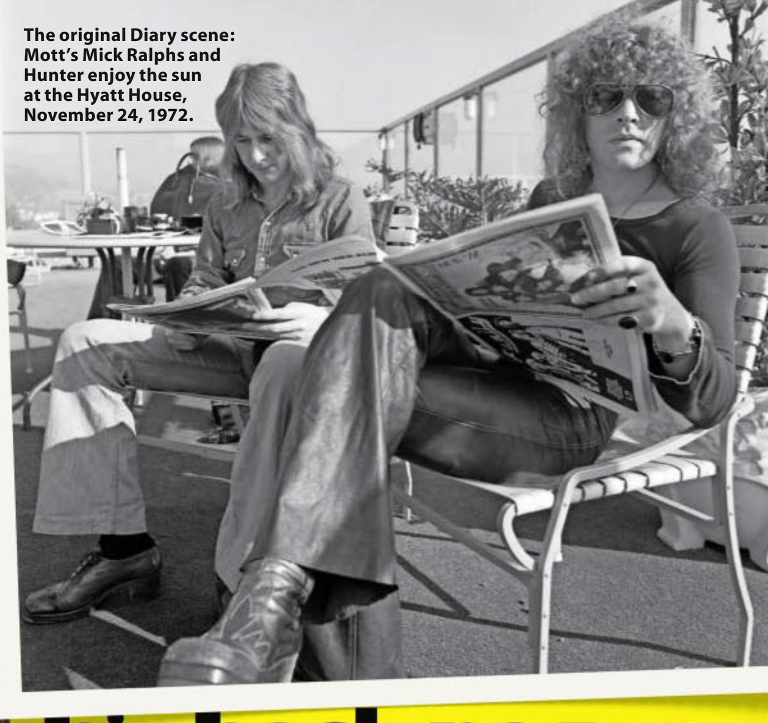
Erotica in Japan – is out there!

Where do we eat tonight? Ross knows plenty of places and is not happy that my choice would be a pub (the band's found two already). Jeff Beck likes the pub. Jimmy

Charles de Cazanove
KIRIN

Ross Halfin (2), Getty Images

MR. BEAN'S
HOLIDAY



The original Diary scene: Mott's Mick Ralphs and Hunter enjoy the sun at the Hyatt House, November 24, 1972.

Rocking The Garden on the last night of the three-night stand (facing page, from left) Mark Bosch, Hunter, James Mastro and Paul Page; Hunter's airplane viewing choices (above) the House Of Cards, American style and Mr Bean's Holiday - "Nah!" ; Ian enjoys stocking up at Dust an' Dreams, an "Aladdin's cave of bootlegs"; (opposite, below) in-flight beverage and local brew.

Page likes the pub. Those austerity years sure made a big impression on us chaps. The Japanese are good at everything, so the fish and chips must be gorgeous! Loads of people wearing white breathing masks here. They not only do it to stop getting other people's germs, they do it so as not to spread their own. Polite squared! They nod – you nod – they nod lower, each time you're supposed to nod lower than the last. Take this to its logical conclusion and you're nutting the street!

The record shop we visited was in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo and for dinner we wandered around Roppongi where we ate at an Italian restaurant, Napule, where the Japanese chef won the competition for the best pizza in Sicily. Ross is a trove of rock'n'roll information and history (I think he found us through Joe Elliott). Roppongi is for walking around – not buying – too expensive. Ross took a few photos on a beautifully lit street and after a wander we wound up in a massive Starbucks with a bookstore in its midst. Thousands of books, watches, pens, clothes – pity about the coffee. Jet lag not too bad; back to the hotel by midnight.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2015

10am – no room service, so I go down for breakfast. This bloke, Tom, comes from Australia to a lot of our gigs and we chat awhile. More fans lurking outside the breakfast room (well, three) so I've got six now! Slept OK, but woke at 4am – took a down – and went off again until 8. Trudi is not so lucky; she's been awake since 4 and is now snoozing while I shave. Going to see Buddha.

You can tell if fans are real here – they physically shake. They try to take pictures, but the cameras are all over the place. Then the rains came – horizontal. We went to Asakusa on the tube (clean and friendly). (Rickshaws doing lousy business today). Brief – very brief – visit to Senso-ji temple and then, because of the rain Ross and I wind up gossiping in a small Starbucks. Girls are fed up; back on the tube at around 3:30 to miss the evening rush (they have poles here with pillows on the end to stuff you in during the rush hour). Wound up ➢

his back pages

Ian Hunter looks back at the original Diary Of A Rock'n'Roll Star.

On November 21, 1972, as the David Bowie-penned-and-produced single All The Young Dudes began to make its way up the US charts, Mott The Hoople headed to America for a tour that would last until Christmas Eve. It was this jaunt that the band's perma-shaded frontman Ian Hunter, then 33, chronicles across a 150-odd pages that make up the original Diary Of A Rock'n'Roll Star, one of rock's first and most insightful memoirs.

"It was a fluke," he laughs today, down the line from the home he shares with his wife Trudi in Connecticut, commenting on the book's success. "I'd just got married and we were going on tour but when the social aspects suddenly aren't there then touring becomes boring, so that's why I decided to keep a diary. It didn't matter where I was – whether I was at the airport, hotel or completely out of it at 2am in the morning – it became a habit. I just had to write things down, and it sort of kept me out of trouble."

Hunter's writing style matches his talent as a songwriter, a mix of rock'n'roll jive talk and romanticism blending with his keen powers of observation and an unflinching honesty to provide the reader with an arm-around-the-shoulder view of the realities of life on the road and of America itself.

"As a working-class kid, I'd always wondered what America was like before I went there, so I wanted to give people a real sense of the place, because our fans weren't likely to get there themselves," explains Ian, whose attention to detail is evident from the opening line where he invites you on-board TWA flight 761 for a 10-and-a-half-hour flight to Los Angeles.

"i just had to write things down. it sort of kept me out of trouble."

Diary of a
rock'n'roll
star
ian hunter
Lead Singer for
mott
the hoople

Laying bare the vagaries of the music business and the emotional toll of touring on Mott as Christmas begins to loom, Hunter's diary also serves up an impressive cast of fellow travellers including "Mr Nutrocker" Kim Fowley (run over after a Mott show in Northampton), Keith Moon ("a nice lad"), Frank Zappa ("a quiet family man"), Bryan Ferry ("like a Dracula-type Presley"), Joe Walsh ("pissed and brilliant") and, of course, Bowie. The latter takes an arduous 300-mile cab journey from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia to join Mott on-stage. Hunter is happy to see him but, pulling no punches, notes: "He's not been eating again… He is the only star I know who regularly suffers from malnutrition."

"I'm not renowned for bullshit and I don't insult people unless I like them, so I guess it all went down OK," says Hunter, when asked whether his candid approach met with any adverse reaction from the musicians involved. "I was just amazed that the book was so well received."

The diary itself ends in a glorious fashion following Mott's show in Memphis, where a suitably refreshed Hunter insists on going to visit Graceland. It's well past 12.30am, The King is in residence and, despite being turned away, Hunter sneaks in though the gates and walks in through Presley's back door where he the maid, Alberta Holman, politely tells him that Elvis "ain't seein' anybody".

"It is a pretty good ending," agrees Hunter, "but to be honest, if that hadn't happened it would have been a pretty crap book!"

Published some 18 months after the tour, in 1974 by Panther Books through a deal secured by DJ Charlie Gillett, today Diary Of A Rock'n'Roll Star has lost none of its charm, wit or sincerity. It does, however, remain out of print although Hunter owns the rights.

"Yeah. Tell anybody that's interested in it, they should give me a call!" he cackles.

Phil Alexander

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100g (税込) ¥ 5.250

Hunter on stage, January 17; (right top) freezing at Fujimurosengen; (right centre) with Japanese iconographer Sukita; (far right) Mott's Morgan Fisher joins the fun; (bottom, from left) Matsusaka beef; Sensoji Temple; "wobbly bum" sumo wrestlers.

≺ in an Izakaya (Japanese-style pub) called VOTAMI near the Prince – and bump into fans again. DiBrizzi joins us and we rock'n'roll converse – Joe Elliott would have loved it. Ross gets me going and I remember a lot more than I thought I did. All the silliness, the daftness of rock'n'roll. Those actually WERE the days. Izakaya is cute; shoes off, lock them in cabinet – sit at a table level with the floor and with your feet in a pit. Kaz orders bits and pieces in Japanese and off Ross and me go again. We must be the two most boring chaps on the planet – still haven't worn "the subject" out. The band's up on the roof of the Prince and I join them for a drink. We start thinking about the gig. We've been going our separate ways – everybody likes to do their own thing, but now it's time to zero in on why we were here.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2015

Day of first gig. Sunny – breezy – cool. So this is get yourself together day. Unpack everything – put what you won't need down low. I have a routine I maintain regardless of circumstances. Everything has to be clear and in its place or I forget stuff. Trudi's off shopping with Kaz and Meaghan while I get organised. Got a couple of Lansky's (Elvis's Memphis clothing store) T-shirts that I'm favouring at the moment along with an odd little black jacket my daughter-in-law, Karen, bought me. It's now 2:30 and they're picking me up at 3:30. Have to stay at the gig because of the heavy traffic. All my gear is ready – I'll just pop in the bath (smaller – rounder and deeper than the English variety). The toilet's a hoot. The seat is hot and there's controls for 'bidet' and 'splash' – I got that Christmas feeling!

5:30pm. Just finished soundchecking – and the sound is fine. Morgan Fisher turns up and knows what's going on so it's all pretty easy. Now comes the bit where they all go out eating and I stay here doing bugger all. The backstage area is actually very nice – quite big and clean so it's not a major problem. Normally I'd go back to the hotel after a soundcheck, but it's impossible with Tokyo traffic combined with the fact that Japanese shows are early. Tonight is the latest we play – 7:30pm. No opening act. They must come straight from work. Band says the area around here (Shimokitazawa) is very cool with smaller shops and second-hand stores. They are buying stuff.

We did the first show and it was most enjoyable. Felt like the Roxy in LA, though a tad on the sweaty side. Stand-up audience and packed into the club. I was told audiences would be very quiet, and they would applaud, then suddenly stop between songs. That didn't happen – they were a great audience – just like anywhere else.

It would be silly for us to try to bring a road crew to Japan – the work ethic here is so good and they do their homework with YouTube. So our chaps were all Japanese from the club owner, Masato Oki, who sorted our guitars; the FOH soundman, Yu Ki Miyoshi, was great, as were the lighting guys, Taiki Toukairin and Nishio and stagehand, Tomoo Nogami. A good sound guy can watch your last few shows and get a pretty good idea of what's going on. These guys were very thorough – plus they work here all the time and know the room.

Naoto Ozawa, from Warner Music, Japan, turned up and seemed to like the gig. They have just re-released *You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic* and *Short Back N' Sides* here. After the gig he took Ross, Kaz, Trudi and me to Hama in Roppongi where we had Matsuzaka beef in a private dining room kinda like Benihana – only in Buckingham Palace. Beef and wine were exquisite. Got back around 1am.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2015

Fans in the lobby when I go down – they seem to be there all the time. I sign stuff (because they're shaking). They are going to the shows so they could well be legit. Hey – I'm in Japan – be nice! Morgan brought a huge bottle of saki with him last night – actual gold specks floating around in a lava lamp. I'm not fond of the taste.

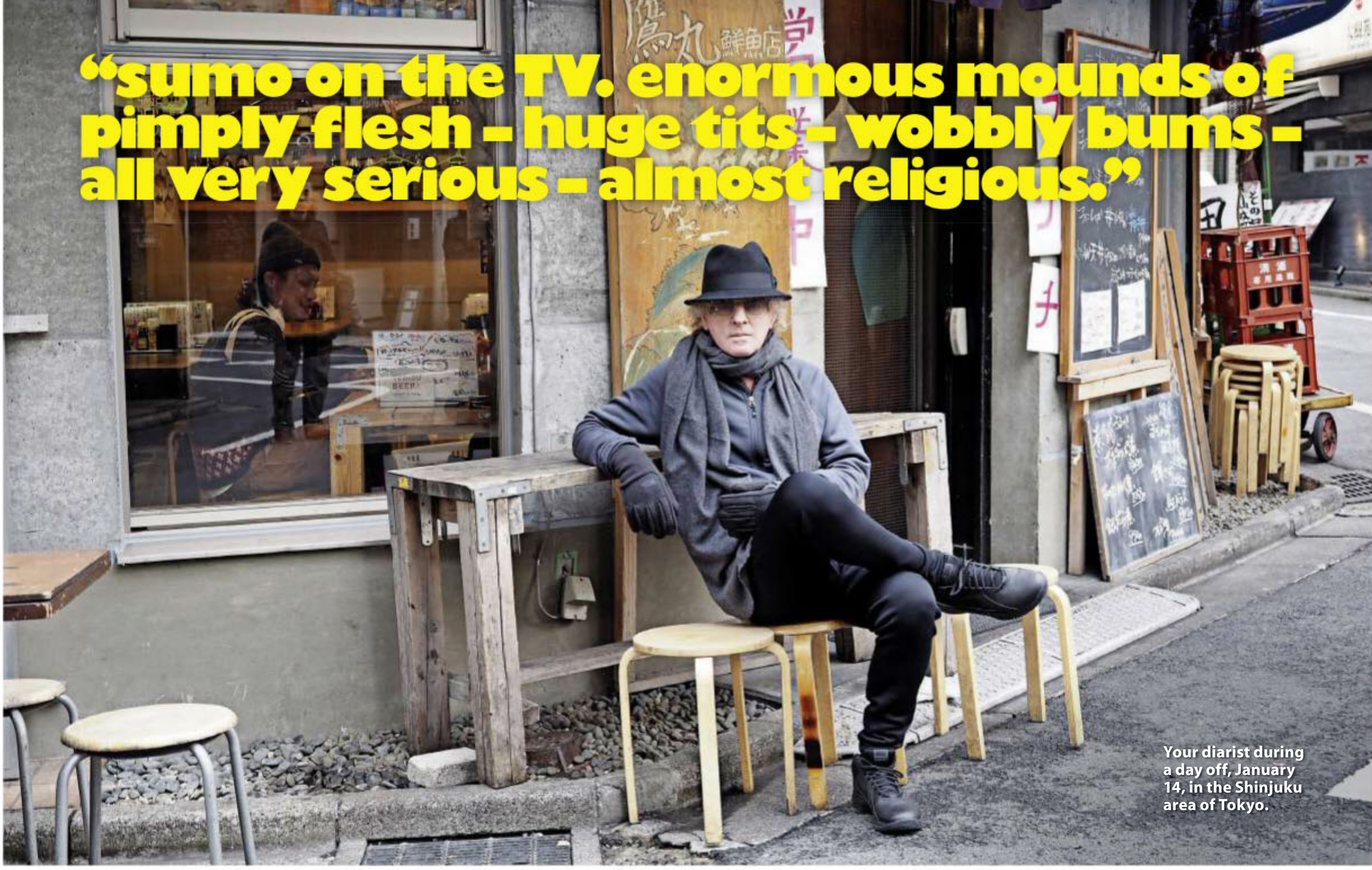
There's a bloke on TV screaming at fresh air. There's a bloke playing a huge horn to a tree. Blokes with huge swords and axes and tiny little pill box hats. Now there's a guy with a bow and arrow and everybody's praying. Smoke all over the place, and they're slinging it at tourists. Fascinating stuff – huge fire and lots of chanting.

1pm. Met Paul and Dennis and we went to see Shinjuku Botanical Gardens. Pretty amazing in the greenhouse. Dennis and I had a curry at the pub (you can still smoke in restaurants here). The other thing I keep forgetting to mention is cab doors. Never close a cab door – they're automatic and the drivers get real pissy if you try to shut them manually. Tokyo is so jammed that shops and restaurants are piled on top of one another. You look vertically instead of horizontally.

4:15pm. Soundcheck. Morgana wants to do Saturday Gigs because of his piano bit up front so we run it through. Doors open at

Ross Halfin (5), Alamy (2)

“sumo on the TV. enormous mounds of pimply flesh – huge tits – wobbly bums – all very serious – almost religious.”



Your diarist during a day off, January 14, in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo.

6:00 and we’re on at 7:15. Why so early (there’s no opening act)? No idea; didn’t like to ask. Masayoshi Sukita is coming this evening. Masa is a famous Japanese photographer; you’ll recall all the Bowie stuff he did. If you don’t, Google him. He brings his nephew who’s a Mott The Hoople fan and we have a really nice time in the dressing room – photos etc. The gig is packed. I’m soaked to the skin when we come off. They’ve got AC, but it can mess with the voice so we keep it low. Fans are great here – they give us flowers and gifts – even a bottle of prosecco with my picture on it! Great night, but I’ll be aching in the morning. Voice is holding up. Band great.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2015

Kaz sends an e-mail saying Masayoshi would like to shoot the show tonight. Hey, we’re honoured. The only guy in the room as old as me! There’s a great picture he took of Screamin’ Jay Hawkins for the film Mystery Train back when. I’d love a signed one of them. Bowie and Bolan are all very well, but Screamin’ Jay? The look on his face alone!

Interview downstairs at 1pm; gotta get moving – well achy. Interview was fine, but it was about ‘The Hoople’ – didn’t know that going in, so I did the best I could but that’s a long time ago.

Later that night! After the soundcheck, Ross found a wall he wanted me to stand in front of and I do as I’m told. He’s really great at direction: “Gut in – chin up – MORE!” And he gets great results.

Sunday gig was great. Very emotional people – crying. I told them I didn’t think it was that bad! And a first!!! Some guy down the front centre with his hand way down inside his pants. I looked, looked away, and then when it registered, I looked again and his hand was still down his pants. I prefer to think he was scratching his whats-its. Thought I’d seen it all! More presents bestowed upon us. Masa took pictures the entire set as did Ross – plus a couple of other chaps who shouldn’t have. Some lady popped by with Dom Perignon. I had to wrestle Boschy for it. “It’s for the band,” I said. Back at the Prince around 11. We went over the road for bits and drinks.

MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2015

Boschy and Dennis off to New York; Steve to the UK. Paul’s out with a friend – so it’s James, Meaghan, Nori, Ross, Kaz, Trudi ’n’ me in the van and off to Mount Fuji to shoot some photos. Heading out of Tokyo for around 75 minutes and you see hills. Foliage very dark greens and browns – all through the hills – pretty amazing views and then at noon we see Mount Fuji. It’s a monster, no photograph will ever do it justice – and it’s active. It last went up in 1707 and Kaz says it’s overdue for another eruption. Not now.

Ross doesn’t like the light so we adjourn to a restaurant. Its owner has a huge purple Batmobile parked outside – fully loaded and ready to go. In the restaurant he has these rather large fish in rather small tanks. He says they’re all from the lake at the foot of Fuji. He’s got walls full of Japanese personalities’ autographs – definitely an entrepreneurial type. Coffee is so much softer here than in the States.

Still waiting for the light after a surprisingly good meal. The john was a sight to behold – do go there. Ross and Kaz say there’s a very old temple nearby built in 699 called Fujimurosengen – closely related to the most famous samurai clan, the Takeda family. We later found out it was the oldest shrine of them all. It’s a bit nippy, but we make our bows, clap our hands and put yen in the boxes. Ross took a few pictures while we were at it.

Back at the lake the wind is picking up and Ross shoots more of me with Fuji in the background. This was very special. I’m reminding myself I’m here – sometimes you don’t realise how good a day out can be until it’s gone.

Ross is finally happy with what he’s got and we’re in the van heading back. I forgot the little snow playground Ross shot me in as well.

Adrenalin from the gigs is slowly leaving and tiredness overcomes us as we head back to Tokyo. Ross has work to do and we’ve still got the Dom Perignon, so we take it to an Indian restaurant near the Prince. I tell Jim it’s his 50th birthday and we all sing happy birthday – including the waiters. It was the only way to get the Dom chilled and glasses set up. Oh, how they clapped!

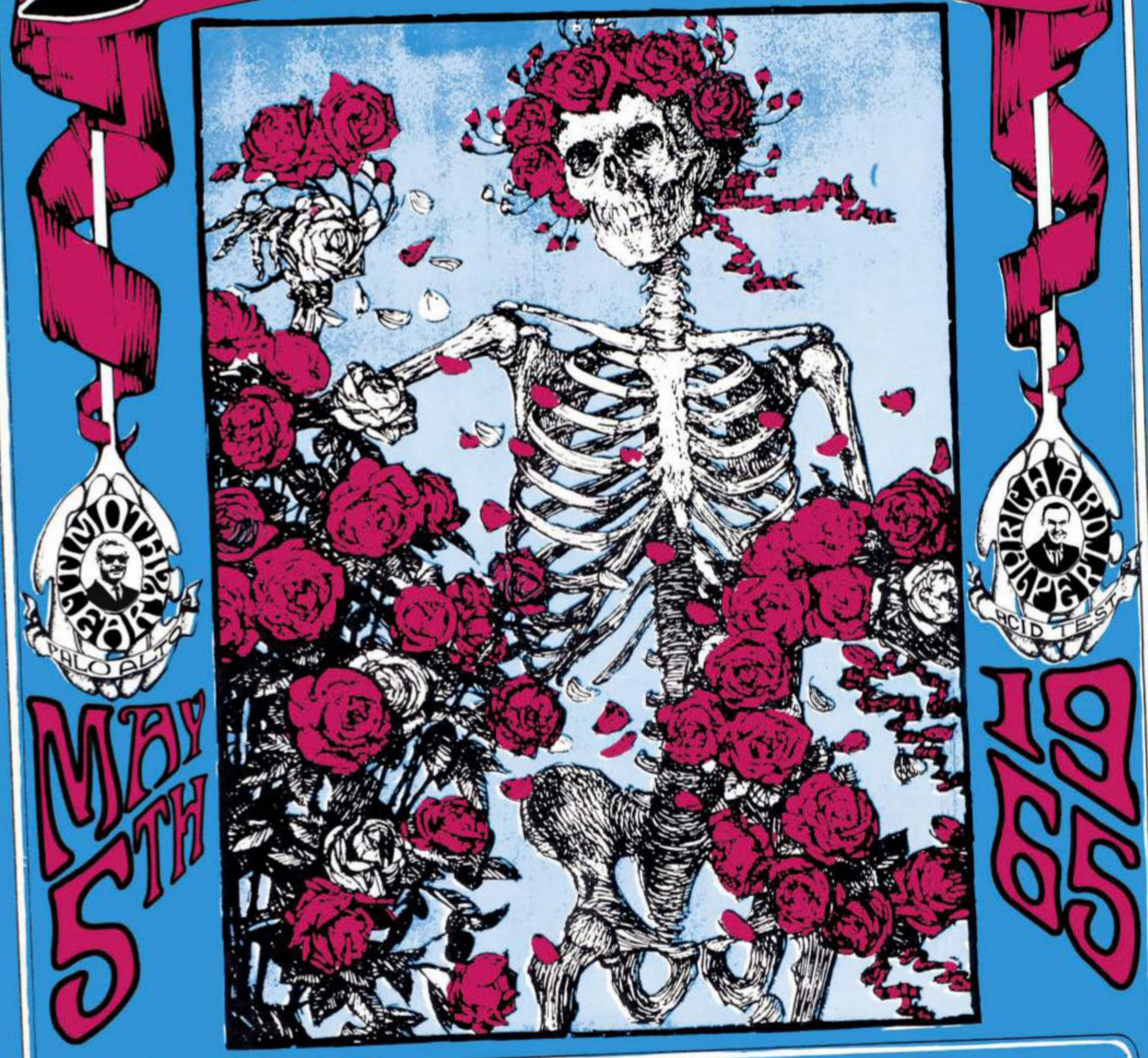
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2015

Up at 5am and we land at JFK at 11am – got a day back. So that’s it: 40 gigs, done and dusted. Most enjoyable way to end a tour. Went to a lot of great places and met a lot of great people. I also got to lead a great band for great fans. Doesn’t get much better than that.

Of course, it’s all changed a bit since 1972, but haven’t we all?

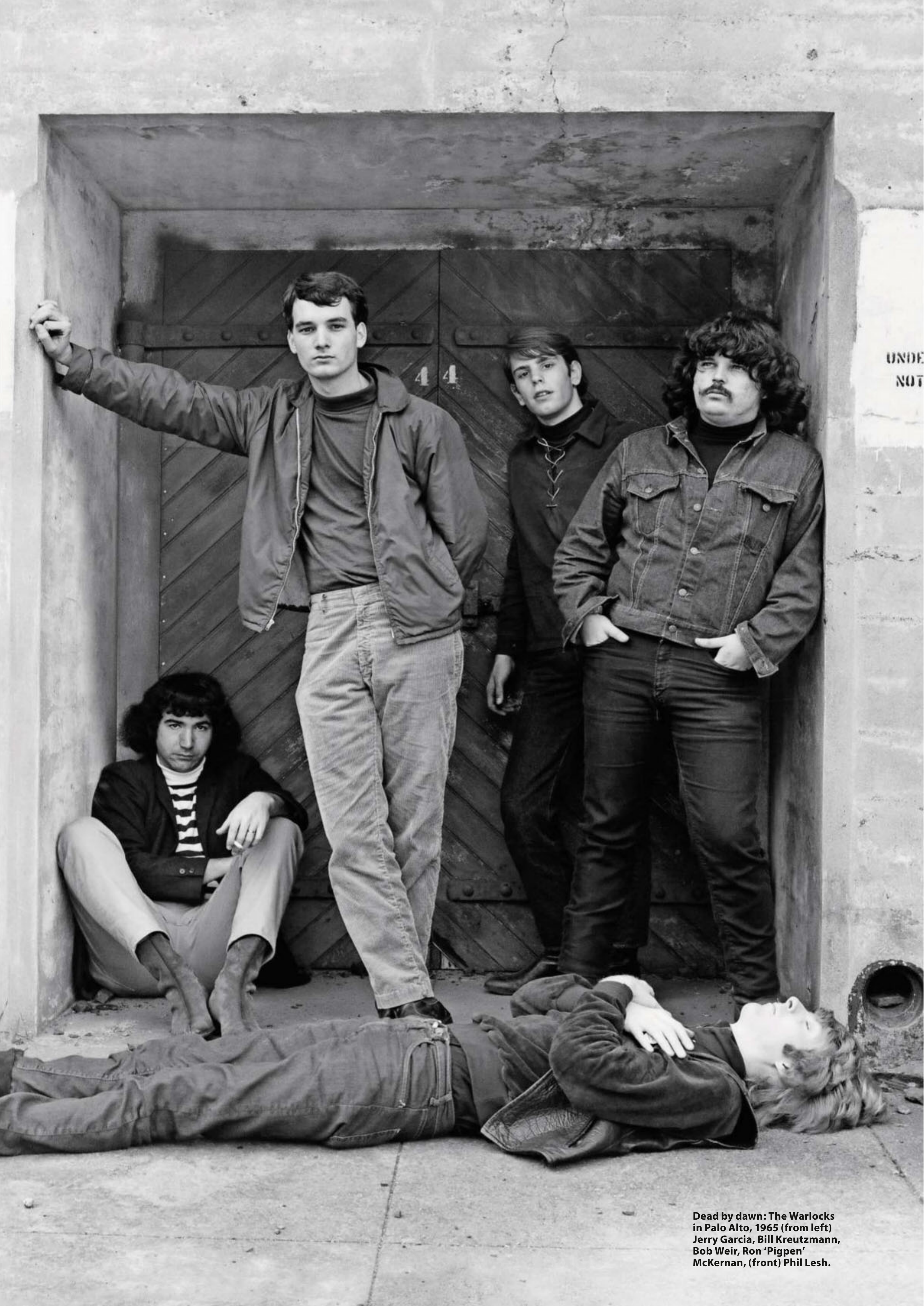
Ian Hunter, January 30, 2015, Connecticut, USA

DAWN OF THE DEAD

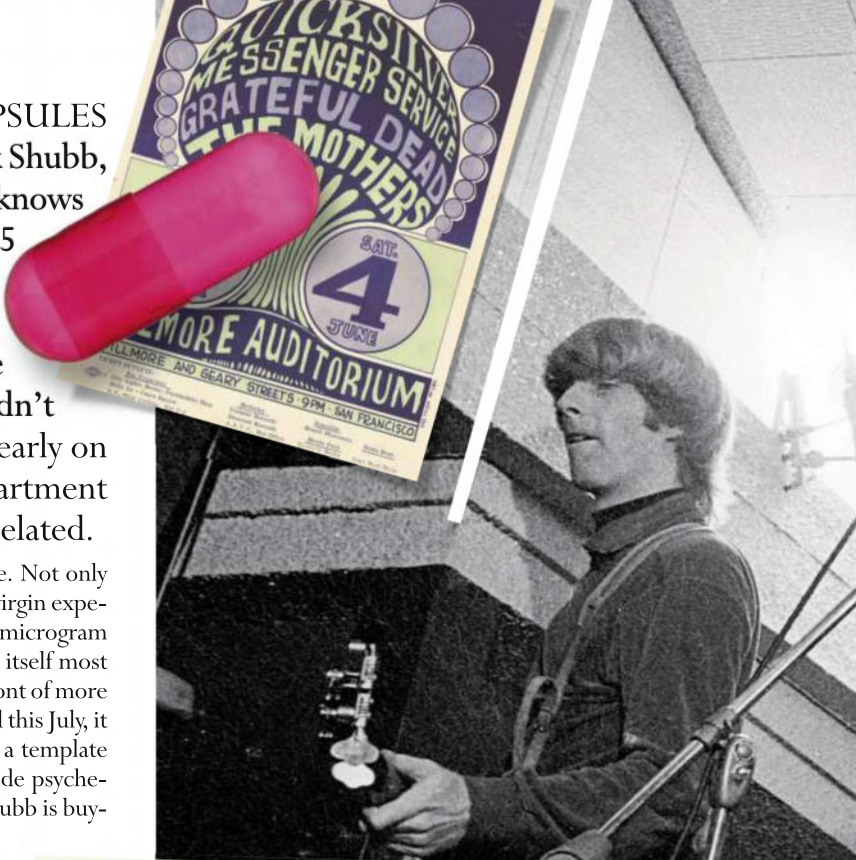

TIMOTHY LEARY
PALO ALTO
RICHARD ALPERT
ACID TEST
MAY 5TH
1965

No American band better defined the psychedelic half-life of '60s musical endeavour than the **Grateful Dead**. On the 50th anniversary of their creation, MOJO delves into the untold story of their leader **Jerry Garcia**'s first trip, the consciousness-expanding acid drop that set that whole weird train in motion.

Words: **Jesse Jarnow** Portrait: **Herb Greene**



Dead by dawn: The Warlocks in Palo Alto, 1965 (from left) Jerry Garcia, Bill Kreutzmann, Bob Weir, Ron 'Pigpen' McKernan, (front) Phil Lesh.



THE MAGENTA TINTED CAPSULES appear almost empty to Rick Shubb, but the young folk musician knows it doesn't take a lot of LSD-25 to go a long way.

"It had all the feel of a sleazy dope deal, except it was legal," he says of the acquisition. It wouldn't be legal for long. But bright and early on May Day 1965, in the San Francisco apartment of a man he barely knows, the mandolinist is elated.

The capsules will go further than Shubb can possibly imagine. Not only does this batch of LSD provide Shubb and his friends with their virgin experience in the psychedelic other-world, but it will provide a 250-microgram seed for the long, strange trip of the Grateful Dead. Manifesting itself most recently for three very-sold-out 50th anniversary shows in front of more than 60,000 heads a night at Chicago's Soldier Field this July, it is a trip that – in 2015 – continues to provide a template and historical reference point for the worldwide psychedelic culture that followed in its wake. Rick Shubb is buying Jerry Garcia's first acid.

ALL RICK SHUBB KNOWS IS THAT HE'S READ Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert's book The Psychedelic Experience and taken it upon himself to acquire some of the powerful hallucinogenic for his cadre of friends to try. Invented by chemist Albert Hofmann two decades earlier, the Swiss chemical company Sandoz marketed LSD as a mind-manifesting wonder-drug of unclear purpose, which by May of 1965 is increasingly making its way into America's bohemian undergrounds. Shubb had searched for a long time. "Days," he laughs. "All of this was kind of truncated, it happened pretty fast."

He acquires as many of the pills as he can, around 50, at the hefty price of $5 each, some money collected from the roommates of the new house he's moving into. "It seemed important," he says. Shubb has to get on the road. He pilots his car over to the East Bay to pick up another musician and then down the San Francisco Peninsula towards his new digs in Palo Alto, the centre of a small but fertile folk scene where most of his friends live. "I felt like Dorothy on the way to the see the Wizard," he says, "meeting up with people as I went."

The next stop is to see Robert Hunter, a 23-year-old poet, inveterate odd-jobber, and sometime bassist in local bluegrass combos. Shubb tells Hunter what they are up to and invites him along.

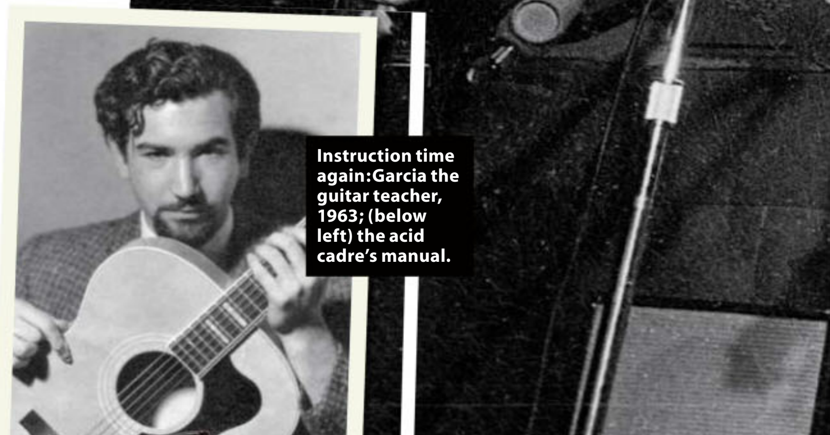
"Have you ever taken LSD?" Hunter asks, somewhat brusquely.

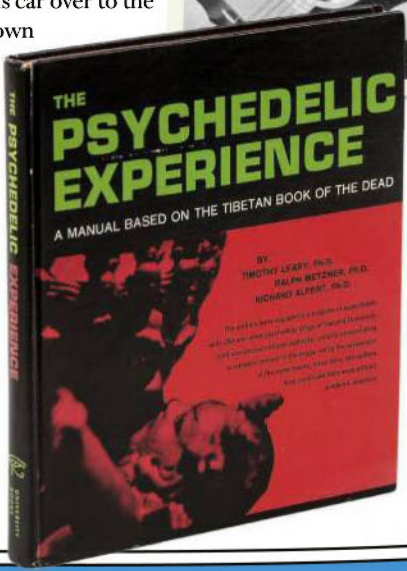
"No," Shubb admits. "Have you?"

One of Hunter's jobs, in fact, was at the Menlo Park Veterans Affairs Hospital, where he'd been paid $140 to take psychedelics under a programme distantly funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. One week, he was administered LSD. The following, psilocybin. The third, mescaline. The last, all three at once. He'd brought along his typewriter the first week and documented his experiences over six rambling and evocative pages.

"Do you always jump out of planes without parachutes?" he asks Shubb, and tells him he'll be there soon.

Finally, Shubb makes it to his new house in downtown Palo Alto, behind the post office, across from the piano store, where a group of friends is assembling. Perhaps unsurprisingly, no one quite recalls the next part of the day in ex-




THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE
A MANUAL BASED ON THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD
BY
TIMOTHY LEARY, PH.D.
RALPH METZNER, PH.D.
RICHARD ALPERT, PH.D.

Instruction time again: Garcia the guitar teacher, 1963; (below left) the acid cadre's manual.

Getty, Alamy

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

JESSE JARNOW CHOOSES 10 ESSENTIAL RECORDINGS, STUDIO, LIVE AND BOOTLEGS, THAT NO TRUE DEADHEAD SHOULD BE WITHOUT.

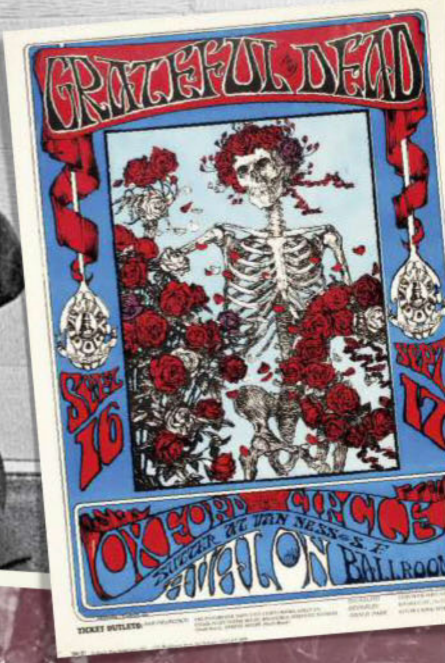
ANTHEM OF THE SUN

(Warner Bros, 1968)

1

Stacking volcanic live tracks with collaged madness, the band's studio-as-instrument phase blooms on the brilliantly segued *Anthem Of The Sun*. Perhaps the best in-studio approximation of psychonautical navigation by any of the '60s San Francisco bands, *Anthem*'s gyroscope-on-piano playfulness is a chaotic field recording of lysergic vibrancy.

GRATEFUL DEAD
ANTHEM OF THE SUN



Under The Warlocks: Lesh, Weir and Garcia play Dana Morgan's Music Store, Palo Alto, shot by Paul Ryan, late '65; the 1966 Stanley Mouse and Alan Kelly posters; (inset below) the only photo with many of the primary characters in the tripping portion of the story in one place (from left) it's Jerry Garcia, Robert Hunter, Eric Thompson, David Nelson, and (perhaps) Sandy Rothman.

> "WE WERE INTO STUDYING BLUEGRASS BANDS UP CLOSE — HOW THEY WORKED"

actly the same way.

For the longest time, Jerry Garcia hasn't been able to keep a band together. Since getting out of the Army a half-decade back, the 22-year-old banjo and guitar instructor has been in well over a dozen. The Black Mountain Boys, the Hart Valley Drifters, The Wildwood Boys, the Asphalt Jungle Mountain Boys, Badwater Valley Boys, Thunder Mountain Tub Thumpers, and Sleepy Hollow Hog Stompers have all gone by the wayside. Jams at house parties are all well and fun, but Jerry Garcia is a serious musician.

"He was deeply, deeply into recordings," remembers Sandy Rothman, a Black Mountain Boy, among others. "He'd be able to talk about the playing and elucidate every part of it just from almost casual listening, but deep listening."

The summer before, in 1964, Garcia had taken leave from his teaching job at Dana Morgan's Music in Palo Alto (not to mention his wife and newborn daughter) and he and Rothman had travelled east with a Wollensak reel-to-reel, watching bluegrass combos and making recordings. "We were into studying ➢

It's alive: Garcia with the Dead, September '67, the Hollywood Bowl.

LIVE/DEAD

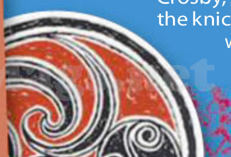
(Warner Bros, 1969)

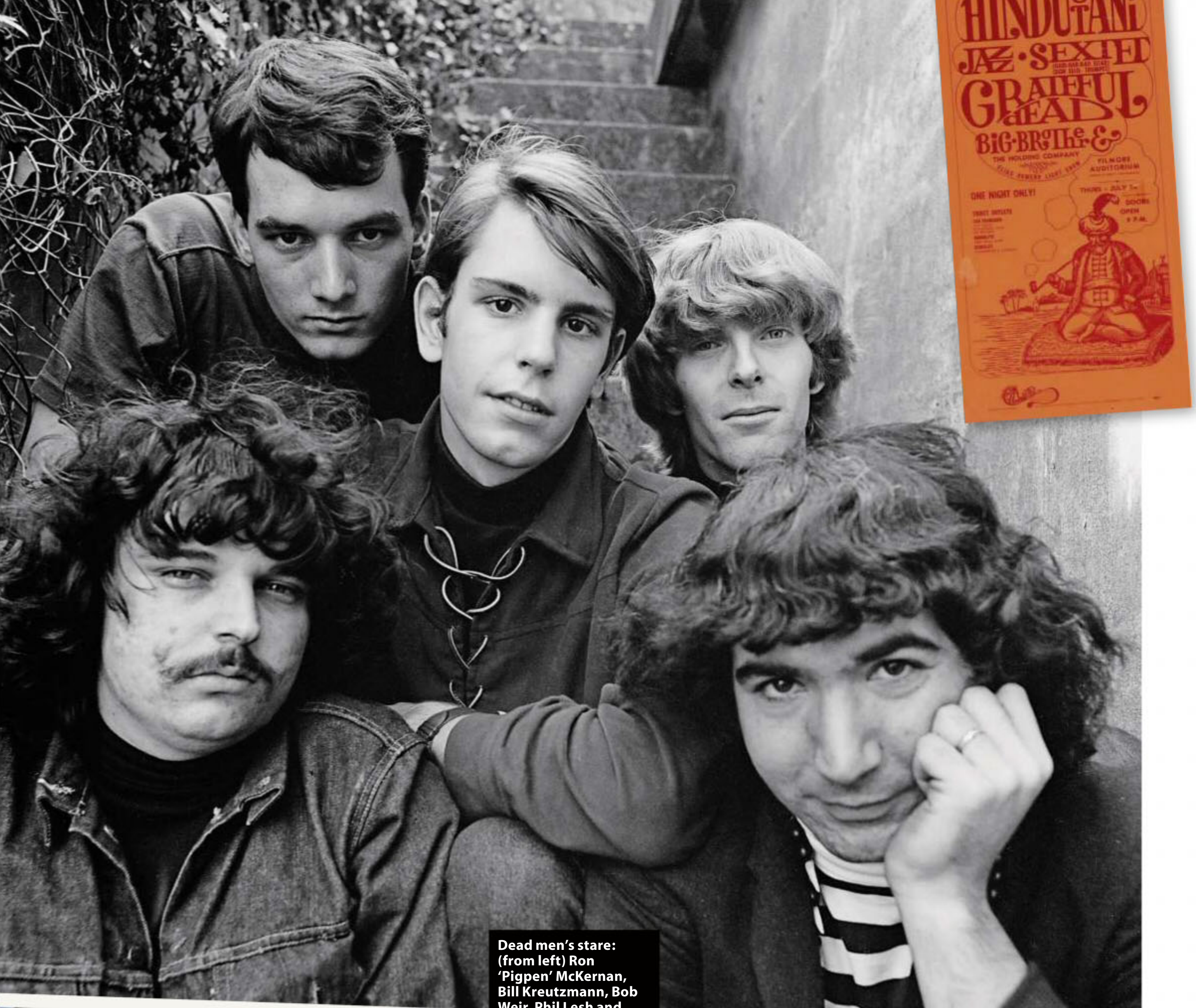
2 Taped in San Francisco's hallowed ballrooms, the Dead's first live album leads with the quietly intricate 23-minute group improvisation, Dark Star, and feeds into a seven-part psychedelic mega-suite whose cryptic lyrics, double-drummer thrills, and questing Jerry Garcia solos map a universe beyond the double-LP gatefold.

AMERICAN BEAUTY

(Warner Bros, 1970)

3 Collapsing their cosmic learning into elegant folk parables by Garcia and maturing lyricist Robert Hunter, the Dead discover (with informal lessons from Crosby, Stills, and Nash) how to harmonise, and just in the knick of time. Standards, hymns, and lullabies for w Earth, as beautiful as they are enduring.




HINDUSTANI
JAZZ·SEXTET
GRATEFUL DEAD
BIG·BROTHER &
THE HOLDING COMPANY
ONE NIGHT ONLY!
FILLMORE AUDITORIUM
THURS · JULY 7
DOORS OPEN 9 P.M.

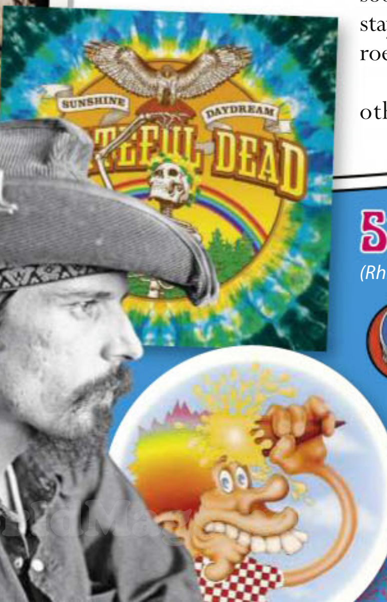
Dead men's stare: (from left) Ron 'Pigpen' McKernan, Bill Kreutzmann, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh and Jerry Garcia, late 1965; (below left) live in '72; (bottom) a physically depleted McKernan the same year.

© Herb Greene, Getty, James R Anderson Photography

≺ them," says Rothman, "watching bands up close, watching how they worked, and what they did."

For weeks, they collected rare live bluegrass recordings, and saw (and taped) performances by the father of the genre, Bill Monroe, among others. When they could, they played music, too. Garcia soon returned to his family but Rothman stayed behind, scoring a job with Monroe himself.

Garcia knows his bluegrass but few others possess the studiousness he


SUNSHINE DAYDREAM
GRATEFUL DEAD

EUROPE '72

(Warner Brothers, 1972)

4 Some jams, darting all-cylinders arrangements, overdub sweetening, and mucho sunshine make *Europe '72* a friendly entry point. With Keith Godchaux and Pigpen's Band-like piano/organ combo colouring a one-drummer line-up, the tour is a favourite for Deadheads, released in its entirety on 73 CDs in 2011.

SUNSHINE DAYDREAM

(Rhino, 2013; recorded 1972)

5 Three sets (and 102-minute anthropological documentary) in the melting Oregon heat during a Merry Prankster-hosted benefit in ust 1972. Stoned stage announcements, ard-driving meltdown on Playing In The Band, and a mind-dissolving vision quest of a Dark Star that resolves to some of Garcia's best-ever country crooning.

desires. He picks up gigs playing bass in a rock band called The Zodiacs, jamming at Stanford University fraternity parties, occasionally alongside a soulful teenage miscreant called Ron McKernan, nicknamed Pigpen, on harmonica. But, increasingly, Jerry Garcia is looking for something new out of music, if not life. Another new venture, with McKernan and others, is called Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions, playing good-time folk music with an utter lack of precision but a deficit of joy.

Jerry Garcia already has fans, or at least one, the local drummer Bill Kreutzmann, who first sees Garcia perform in 1964 with Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions. I'll follow that guy anywhere, Kreutzmann thinks. As it happens, Kreutzmann – a fill-in drummer with The Zodiacs – has perhaps already shared the stage with Garcia, but seeing him lead a band makes it click. Garcia and Kreutzmann occasionally cross paths at Dana Morgan's, where the teenage Kreutzmann picks up work teaching drums.

The Jug Band plays its last hootenannies in January '65 and Pigpen, the music shop's latest janitor, suggests they go electric. Bob Weir, the 16-year-old junior guitarist and jug-blower in Mother McCree's will play rhythm guitar. Dana Morgan Jr, son of the music shop owner, takes up bass. Garcia calls Bill the Drummer. They borrow instruments from the store, set up in the back room, and – as winter turns to spring – get to practising. Sometime in April, they line up their first show.

ASIDE FROM THE MATTRESSES, THE HOUSE IS DEVOID of furniture and there are no window-shades. Robert Hunter arrives and briefs the troops on roughly what's going to happen. In the late afternoon, Rick Shubb dispenses the LSD. Someone has filled the living room floor with pillows, others go to be alone (as suggested by The Psychedelic Experience), and everyone waits to see what's next. "The pills were definitely not empty," Shubb affirms.

All agree that Jerry Garcia arrives some time later. In Shubb's memory, Robert Hunter brings him over. In another account, he is there helping a friend move into the house and is invited along (which also contributes to how the specific first-of-the-month date is triangulated). According to Butch Waller, the mandolinist Shubb retrieved in the East Bay, he and Garcia wander to a nearby creek where Garcia waits for the acid to kick in. At some point, perhaps before he drops, perhaps after, he walks (or even drives) home to get his wife Sara.

Back at the house, someone remembers to turn on the lights. More laughter. "People were wandering in and out of the house and bumping into each other and giggling and touching things," recalls Rick Shubb. Jerry returns at some point. There are the wonderful flowers glowing under the street-lamps. There is a superball and it bounces madly around the interior of the house. They listen to a Ravi Shankar LP and play with a basketball outside, where it trails arrows in the evening air.

"We all took it, glop, glop, you know, here in Palo Alto," Garcia told Rolling Stone in 1972, "and we just wandered round and round the streets bumping into each other and having these incredible revelations and flashes, it was just dynamite; it was just everything I could hope for it to be for me."

Throughout the country, but especially northern California, groups of friends were turning on together.

Amid the collisions in the small California town, there is powerful chemistry and the dawning of the new world. It is a new world that Rick Shubb will help document in 1968, illustrating Humbead's Revised Map Of The World, a popular poster sold in head shops. It is a new world that Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter will provide a soundtrack and words for, via their songwriting partnership in the Grateful Dead. David Nelson, a new housemate, will become a lifelong collaborator with Garcia, co-founder of the Dead's influential dope-lovin' hippy-country spin-off, New Riders Of The Purple Sage. Shubb will invent the industry-standard Shubb brand guitar capo. Dave Parker, another tripper, will soon be drafted to write lyrics for one of the first original songs by Garcia's ➢

DO YOU OWN THIS RECORD?

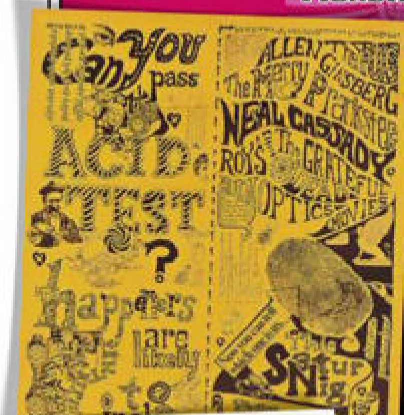
JESSE JARNOW PONDERS THE VERACITY AND WHEREABOUTS OF THE **GRATEFUL DEAD**'S MYTHICAL DEBUT SINGLE.

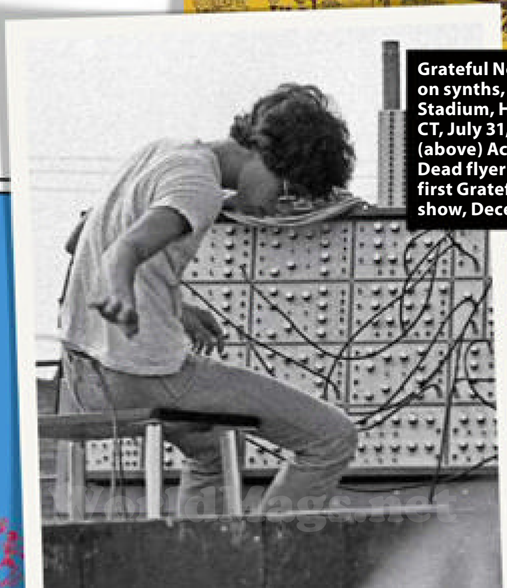
THE FIRST journalist to interview the Grateful Dead did so when the band relocated to Los Angeles with the Merry Pranksters in the spring of 1966 to stage Acid Tests in southern California. The unnamed reporter for the Los Angeles Free Press made his way to the band's house in Watts and, after dodging a feisty Bill the Drummer on the porch, wound up in the band's living room, listening to music at full blast. "What is it?" the reporter yelled. "Our record, out Monday," replied Dead manager Rock Scully. "I Know You Rider, and the flip is Otis On A Shakedown Cruise."

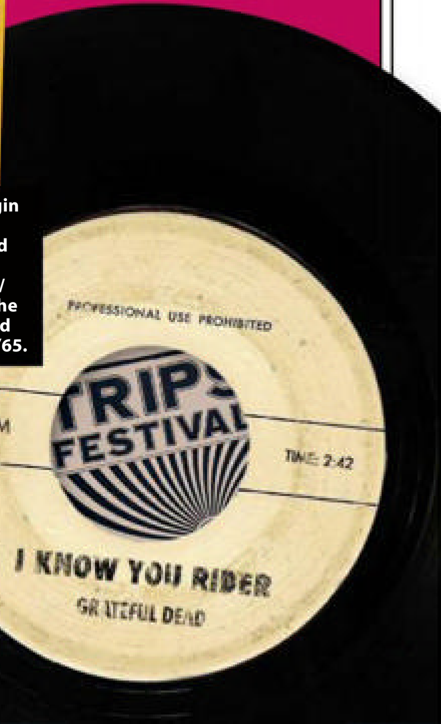
"OUR RECORD, OUT MONDAY: I KNOW YOUR RIDER."

In the decades since, no such record has ever materialised either in physical form or in the memory of anyone but the notoriously erratic Scully, who passed away in December 2014. But, perhaps on that day in March 1966 it really did exist in the mind of an ecstatic manager – maybe even with the consent of the band – about to rush tapes to a local pressing plant.

Recently, a Deadhead archaeologist called John Sarjeant concluded that the long-rumored Otis is, in fact, a song known to Dead collectors as You Don't Have To Ask. The tapes the Free Press reporter heard were likely recorded at home in early 1966 with patron/sound engineer/LSD chemist Owsley Stanley. Or maybe Rock Scully was, and is, a Prankster. Or maybe it's still out there. A white label promo with hand-written song titles. Best keep looking.


Can you pass the Acid Test?
Allen Ginsberg
The Merry Pranksters
Neal Cassady
Roy's Optics
The Grateful Dead
Movies
happeners are likely
Sat. Night





Grateful Ned: Lagin on synths, Dillon Stadium, Hartford CT, July 31, 1974; (above) Acid Test/Dead flyer from the first Grateful Dead show, December '65.

9/11/74 ALEXANDRA PALACE, LONDON, UK

(archive.org)

Some of the band's most dizzying on-stage avant-garde improv, the middle of three sets contains an extended jam with collaborator Ned Lagin on E-mu synthesizer and Fender Rhodes that dissolves beautifully into a pair of Garcia's heaviest set-pieces, Eyes Of The World and Wharf Rat, followed by a long laugh by Jerry.

Let there be Warlocks: Paul Ryan's individual studies of (clockwise from above) Kreutzmann, McKernan, Lesh, Garcia and Weir; (below) Rick Shubb's Humbead's Revised Map Of The World; (bottom) '77 ticket and Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart, Golden Gate Park free concert '75.

◄ newest band. It's called The Only Time Is Now and it is not bluegrass.

Just four days later – May 5, 1965 – a freshly psychedelicised Jerry Garcia debuts with his newest group at Magoo's, a Menlo Park pizza parlour. They call themselves The Warlocks. Of the five playing music, only Garcia has tripped. This will change soon enough, but first they have to learn to be a band.

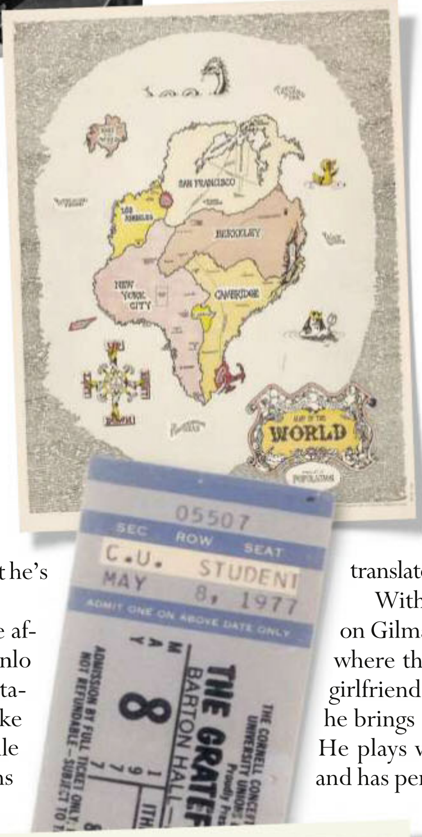
They draw their repertoire, in part, from the first Rolling Stones album, picking up the Stones' arrangements of Slim Harpo's I'm A King Bee and Buddy Holly's Not Fade Away. They don't write any originals quite yet, but they do adapt material from the old jug band, intuitively rewiring old folk into bouncing garage rock driven by Pigpen's Vox Continental organ. With years of banjo muscles, Garcia's fingers can almost handle the solos, but he's still wrapping his mind around the electric guitar.

Guitarist Bob Weir often sneaks out of school in the affluent and sylvan suburb of Atherton, bordering Menlo Park. One of his friends comes along to operate the turntable at practice while they learn new songs from 45s like Junior Walker's Cleo's Back, setting the needle back while the band goes over passages. They've got some problems with the bassist, Dana Morgan Jr, but his dad owns the music store and the instruments, so those problems can wait.

Not all of Garcia's folkie gang make it out to see The Warlocks. Robert Hunter loves it but, to many, the idea of playing rock'n'roll is far more controversial than LSD and they remain committed to traditional bluegrass. "I never did see The Warlocks," says acid-procurer Rick Shubb. "I did hear them a few times after they became the Dead, but didn't really care much for their music."

On the other hand, the folkies are way into the acid, dosing themselves again within days, listening to some of the prized live bluegrass reels, eager to see what the acid does to all those high, lonesome note torrents.

Back at the Gilman Street house a few days after the first trip, in official biographer Dennis McNally's version, Garcia hears Bob Dylan's electrified *Bringing It All Back Home* for the first time, listening to It's All Over Now, Baby Blue over and over.



The Warlocks are a few gigs into their stand at Magoo's when a friend of Garcia's comes to check out the new band and the guitarist solves their bassist problem. Bill Kreutzmann notices Phil Lesh first as a head of blonde hair arguing with the Magoo's manager while the band plays; Lesh had tried to dance and was told to sit down. "Pigpen ate my mind with his harp," Phil Lesh will attest later. In at least one version of the story, he is on acid that night. He'd tried it first the year before, and wound up conducting Mahler's 6th Symphony under the stars in his front yard.

During a break, Garcia sits Lesh in a booth and tells him, in no uncertain terms, that he will play bass in the band. More than anyone, it is Lesh who will help the band translate the freedoms of LSD into their music.

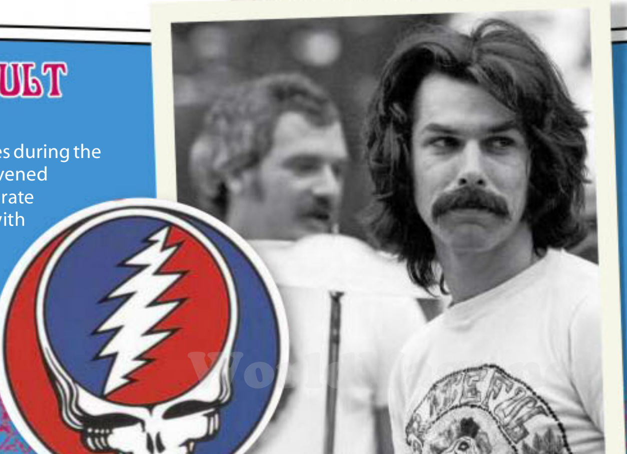
Within weeks, Phil Lesh moves into the house on Gilman Street with Rick Shubb and the others, where they'd first tripped a month earlier. Lesh's girlfriend buys him a Gibson EB-1 electric bass and he brings it along. Phil Lesh is a versatile musician. He plays violin and trumpet, understands theory, and has perfect pitch.

He'd studied with serial composer

ONE FROM THE VAULT

(Grateful Dead, 1991; recorded 1975)

One of only four performances during the hiatus year of 1975, the reconvened double-drummer Dead celebrate *Blues For Allah*'s completion with the single tightest performance of its most difficult music. The culmination of years of chemistry, it is also the only Dead show to feature live crickets, courtesy of Mickey Hart.



5/8/77 BARTON HALL, ITHACA, NY

(archive.org)

Highlighted by the platonic rendition of the ebullient Scarlet Begonias/Fire On The Mountain pairing, from the heart of an action-packed and well-practised tour as equally revered as *Europe '72*, this never-released show is a cornerstone in any Dead collection.

Luciano Berio and had been working on Foci, a piece for four orchestras. "[It] was composed spatially," he would recall in his 2005 memoir. "I imagined the music rotating or sweeping around the audience with each orchestral group at the focus of an ellipse…" but abandoned it.

He has never played bass, but Lesh's conceptual background is perfectly suited to Garcia's restless musical and intellectual curiosity. Lesh doesn't approach the bass in any traditional way. "I wanted to play in a way that heightened the beats by omission, as it were," Lesh wrote, "by playing around them, in a way that added harmonic motion to the somewhat static chord progressions of the songs we were playing then."

They spend the summer of 1965 practising music, experimenting with LSD, and hanging out together and in smaller groups, including a group trip in the Marin Headlands on Garcia's 23rd birthday.

Working their way up the Peninsula, they score a regular gig at the In Room in nearby Belmont, where they play six nights a week, five 50-minute sets a night. During the first week of the run, they back an iteration of The Coasters led by late-'50s member Cornell Gunther. As the band gels, the bartender with the glass eye occasionally sets off lighter fluid flares at peak moments.

"The place was so straight," says Steve Brown, a local music professional who knows Garcia from his music teacher days, becomes an In Room regular, and later works for the band. "It was like stewardesses and insurance salesmen hitting on each other. We'd go into the parking lot, get high and go back in."

Jerry Garcia finally has a group that will keep together. He asks his new housemate Rick Shubb to design a drumhead to replace the crude sign taped to Bill the Drummer's kit.

> "THERE IS NO CLOSURE WITH THIS MUSIC. IT CONSTANTLY EVOLVES."

50th ANNIVERSARY

Though there are Velvet Underground and ZZ Top progenitors calling themselves The Warlocks, it is more likely another band using the name, from Beverly, Massachusetts, whose single – The Temper Tantrum b/w I'll Go Crazy on Decca – Phil Lesh spies at a record store one day in late 1965 that causes The Warlocks to never use Shubb's appellation.

His Own Sweet Advocates! suggests Weir as a replacement name. The Crusaders! suggests Kreutzmann. Mythical Ethical Icicle Tricycle! suggests Garcia. In November, they cut half-a-dozen songs as The Emergency Crew, including The Only Time Is Now and Garcia's equally saucer-eyed Can't Come Down.

Soon, they open a dictionary, and in Garcia's 1972 myth-defining quote: "Everything else on the page went blank, diffuse, just sorta oozed away, and there was GRATEFUL DEAD, big black letters edged all around in gold, man, blasting out at me, such a stunning combination."

They use the name first at a packed house party thrown in downtown San Jose by the author Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters following a Rolling Stones gig.

"We found that while high we were able to go very far out musically but still come back to some kind of recognisable space or song structure," Lesh would write of the San Jose Acid Test. "I knew instantly that this combination – acid and music – was the tool I'd been looking for."

For the first time, the majority of the band (and crowd) are together on LSD while the cosmos unfolds in front of them, around them, and inside them. For the first time, they are the Grateful Dead.

THE NEXT TIME PHIL LESH STARTS AN ORCHESTRAL composition, it is more than 30 years later, following the death of Jerry Garcia and the band's formal announcement that they are no longer the Grateful Dead. But Lesh puts the new work aside.

Attempting to set Dead themes to paper, he told me in 2006, "I had 50 pages of sketches, some of it very detailed. It occurred to me that what I was looking for was closure with Grateful Dead music, so I could move on. But what I discovered is that there's no such thing as a closure with that music, it demands to be constantly evolving."

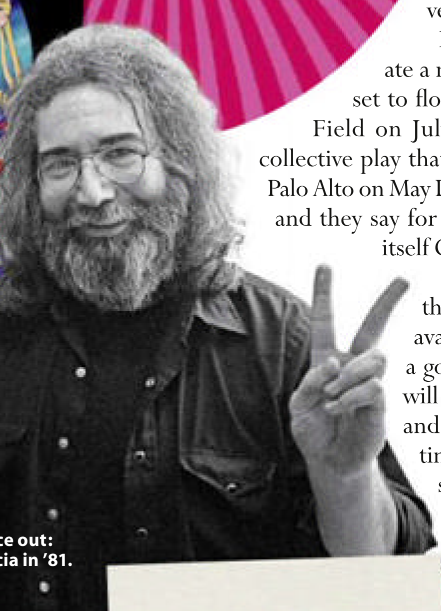
Once again, he picks up the bass.

Bob Weir, too, reinvests himself in Grateful Dead music more than a half-decade after the band's demise, adding Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter's songs to the repertoire of his band Ratdog.

"I was just lonesome for them," Weir tells me. "I go to an entirely other realm where the world and my life continuum is basically all the time I've spent on-stage with these songs. Like yesterday, for me becomes very truly the last time I was on-stage."

Now, a half-century since Jerry Garcia ate a magenta capsule, tens of thousands are set to flock cross-country to Chicago's Soldier Field on July 3, 4, and 5, to participate in the collective play that began its evolution on the streets of Palo Alto on May Day 1965. For the first time in 20 years, and they say for the last time ever, the band is calling itself Grateful Dead.

Acid is scarcer than it once was in the United States, though perhaps more available than it was in 1965. It is still a good wager that a portion of the crowd will be tripping, some even on actual LSD, and some of those, perhaps, for the first time. Among that subset one hopes that some, like Jerry Garcia, will discover it to be a seed. Ⓜ

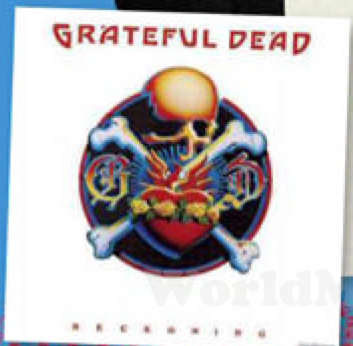


Peace out: Garcia in '81.

Getty (6), Stanley Mouse, Getty

RECKONING

(Arista, 1981; recorded 1980)



9 A warm and comforting acoustic double-LP recorded as the band's substance use was turning to abuse and, eventually, creative stasis. Intimate in a way they never would be again, Garcia's voice is as creaky as the touches of grey in his beard, his guitar as quizzical and wise as ever.

SO MANY ROADS

(Arista, 1999)

10 A masterfully curated five-disc box set of (mostly) live highlights from across the band's career. Cherry-picked moments from The Warlocks to primal Coltrane-influenced improv and heady nuggets from often artistically shaky periods in the '80s and '90s, ending with Garcia and Hunter's striking last originals, from the band's final studio sessions.

Paul Weller on February 24, 2015 and (left) at PolyGram Studios, 1980: "I wasn't trying to be an awkward fucker. I was just shy and inarticulate."

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PAUL WELLER SONGBOOK

WITH A 24TH STUDIO ALBUM ON THE LAUNCHPAD, THE HARDEST WOKING MAN IN SHOWBUSINESS GUIDES MOJO THROUGH 20 OF HIS GREATEST COMPOSITIONS. LOVE, DEATH, FAME, JUSTICE, POETRY AND REGRET; RUBBER PLANTS AND "BIG FUCKING TRUMPETS": THE BIG IDEAS AND LITTLE DETAILS THAT MAKE UP ONE OF THE MOST VIVID CATALOGUES IN MUSIC. "THE THINGS THAT SEEM OF NO VALUE, WHEN YOU PUT THEM IN A SONG, IT CAN ELEVATE THEM," HE TELLS TOM DOYLE.

PORTRAITS BY TOM SHEEHAN.

IN AN EMPTY 100 CLUB ON A TUESDAY LUNCHTIME, Paul Weller sits at a table, sips his tea, looks over at the swing doors of this fabled Oxford Street basement venue, and pictures his teenage self swaggering through them almost 39 years ago. The date was September 20, 1976. The event: the first night of the two-day 100 Club Punk Festival. The bill (in reverse order): Subway Sect, Siouxsie And The Banshees, The Clash and the Sex Pistols.

"I was a Mod by that time," he remembers, with no little pride, "and I walked down them stairs and I just thought, Fucking hell, we're here, mate. This is it."

Dapper today in a black slimline jumper adorned with a purple star, his hair cut to a short, silvery soul boy wedge, Weller recalls the grab-bag of fashions on display that night: mohair jumpers, peg trousers, jelly sandals – the uniform not yet recognisably 'punk'. Later, the headliners even hammered their way through a speedy cover of Substitute by his beloved Who.

Two months earlier on July 9, '76, while – as he buzzingly recalls – "fucking blocked on blues… pills we bought at the Lyceum", he had first encountered the Pistols, who'd turned in a love-to-hate inverted counterblast take on Whatcha Gonna Do About It by his equally adored Small Faces. No surprise then that Weller has no truck with Year Zero approaches to punk, deriding them as music press inventions. He remembers seeing Joe Strummer in the crowd at an early Jam gig upstairs at Ronnie Scott's and baulks at the memory of The Clash singer in a T-shirt bearing the legend: "Chuck Berry Is Dead".

"I thought, Really?" he snorts. "You don't really mean that, do ya? 'Cos Chuck Berry's fucking Chuck Berry, man. He's important."

This is Weller all over, forever the fan. "Oh totally," he enthuses. "I fucking love it. New, old, whatever. Just music." Today he admits he is quietly thrilled by the fact that a new record deal for his upcoming twelfth solo studio album, *Saturns Pattern*, now finds him with Parlophone Records, home of The Beatles. Not least because the vinyl version comes with the imprint's iconic '60s yellow, silver and black label design. "I was so fucking pleased," he beams. "Just once in my life to see that."

A sharp-focusing of the sonic adventurism which began with 2008's double album *22 Dreams* (released a week after his 50th birthday), *Saturns Pattern* matches this latter-day Weller soundscaping to sterling melodies, a dash of *Ram*-era McCartney and emphasis on heavy, trippy grooves. But he shrugs off any suggestion that the heady musical atmospheres on the new record reflect his current choice of intoxicant: five years off the booze, he's now solely on the doobies.

"None of those things have a bearing on the music," he insists. "I've always smoked pot, man. If I imbibe at all, I like very good quality hash. Weed's a young man's drug."

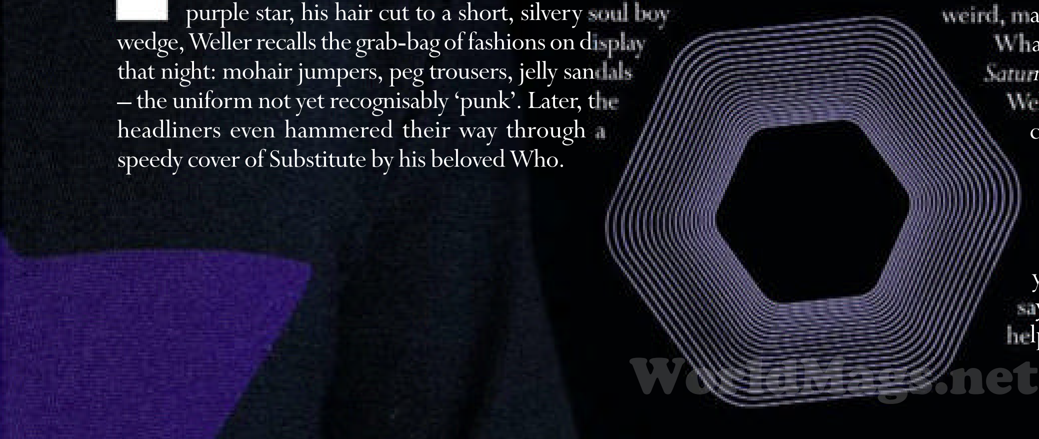
Quitting drinking – and he can remember the exact date: July 1, 2010 – was only, he says, hard at first. The crunch came as the result of a messy night where he got "fucking ratted". The next day, his then-girlfriend, now-wife, Hannah, presented him with a firm ultimatum: it was her or the bottle.

"And for a split second when she said that," he half-grins, "I was just thinking, Hm, maybe I'll have to choose the bottle. Then I came to my senses. So that was it for me, man. I've not really looked back."

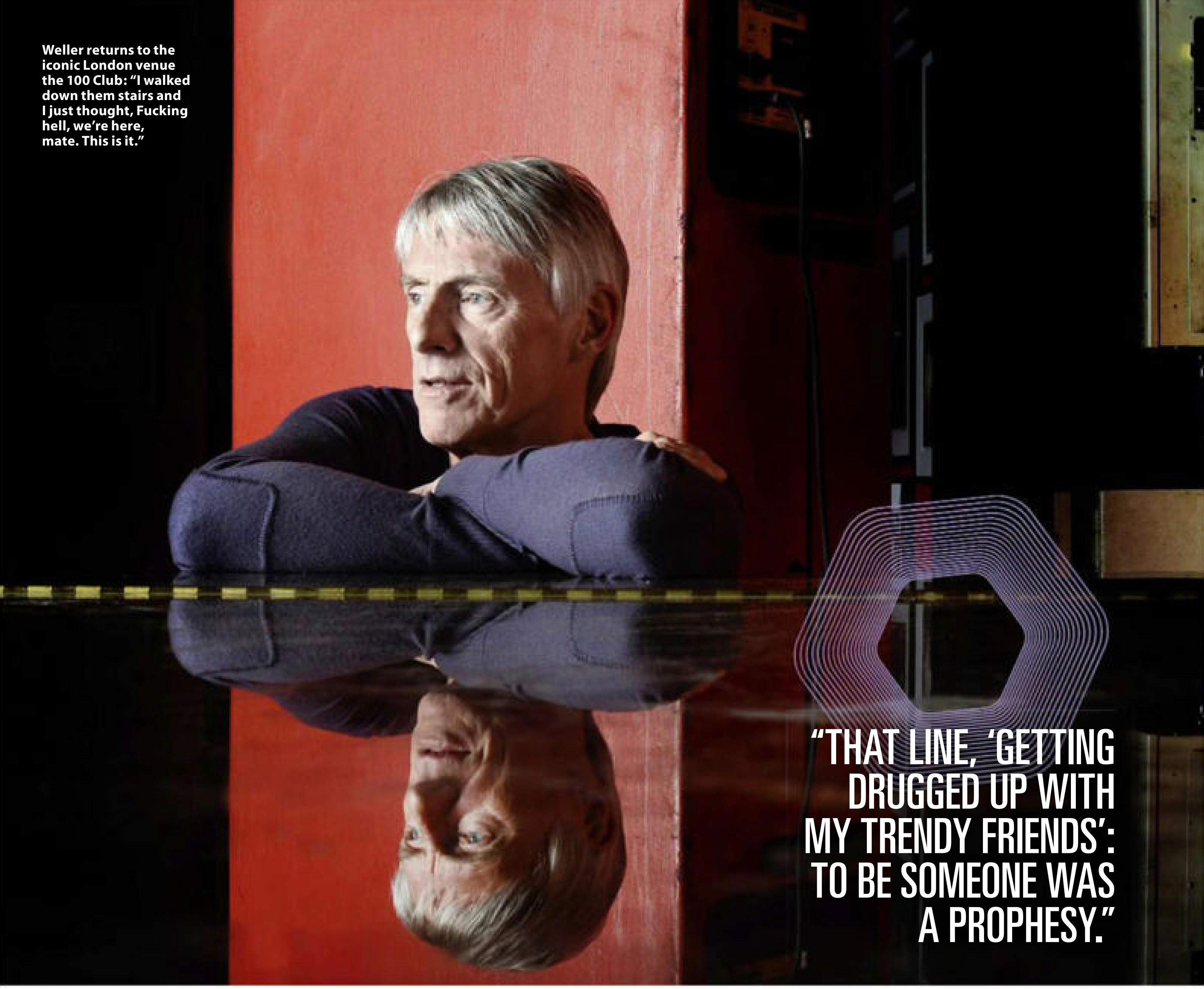
The title of *Saturns Pattern* brings to mind the astrological notion that when the ringed planet returns twice in the average person's lifespan to the position it held in the sky when they were born, it heralds a period of critical change. This typically occurs at 28 and again at 56, the age Weller is now. He says he was unaware of this; he might subconsciously have been inspired by the switch on his Sontronics Saturn vocal microphone which adjusts its sound field pattern, but ultimately he was after a title which echoed T.Rex.

"Like Metal Guru or Telegram Sam," he nods. "But it is weird, man."

Whatever the circumstances of its creation, *Saturns Pattern* already sounds like a standout in the Weller catalogue, spotlighting both the restless creativity and desire for forward motion that have characterised his output since 1977. Today, MOJO wants to guide him through his life in 20 songs that span his career, many of which he admits he hasn't heard in years. "I never listen to the old records," he says, sparking up a Marlboro Red. "Not if I can help it, anyway…" ➢



Tom Sheehan (Shot at iconic London venue the 100 Club, http://www.the100club.co.uk)



Weller returns to the iconic London venue the 100 Club: "I walked down them stairs and I just thought, Fucking hell, we're here, mate. This is it."

"THAT LINE, 'GETTING DRUGGED UP WITH MY TRENDY FRIENDS': TO BE SOMEONE WAS A PROPHESY."

IN THE CITY

(*In The City*, 1977)

Punk-inspired, Mod-shaped mission statement.

"We had a different sort of birth to a lot of the bands, our contemporaries at that time. Because we'd been playing for five years – pubs and working men's clubs and fucking anywhere that would have us, really. I'd been playing since I was 14, sort of semi-pro if you like. So I never got the thing about not tuning your guitar. I wrote this after I'd seen the Pistols and The Clash, and I was obviously into my Who phase. I just wanted to capture some of that excitement. It was a big tune for us. We'd open our set with it, we'd probably play it at the end and if we could get an encore, we'd play it again. The reaction it got from the audience, you knew it was a big tune. I'm not sure about some of the lyrics in it… I was 17, 18, man. But it was a good youth anthem, I thought."

TO BE SOMEONE (DIDN'T WE HAVE A NICE TIME)

(*All Mod Cons*, 1978)

Withering look at the emptiness of fame from a writer on the cusp of stardom.

THE JAM
ALL MOD CONS

"When I was a kid, I thought, I really wanna be a pop star. And then when we got a little bit of it, I didn't really like it. It made me retreat into myself. My friends used to take the piss out of me, saying I disappeared into a bat cave. They'd never see me. I lived in a flat in Pimlico at the time and I'd just withdraw from it all. I just thought it was false and bullshit. *All Mod Cons* blew up really big and I can remember an incident up in Newcastle City Hall where I came out of the gig and it was kind of hysteria really. There were kids clambering and grabbing you and all that. Someone had one side of my scarf and I was getting fucking choked. And I just thought, Pff, I don't like this. I'm very grateful for any success I've had in my life, right, but I was freaked out. And then I got used to it. That line 'getting drugged up with my trendy friends'… that came later, man. It was a prophesy."

THE ETON RIFLES

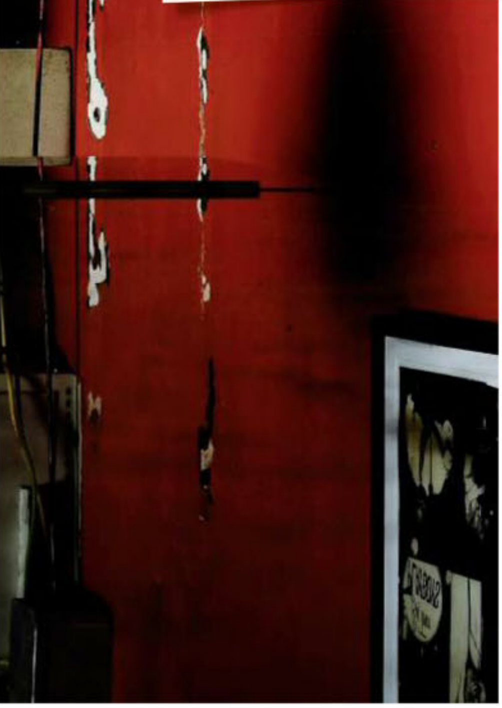
(*Setting Sons*, 1979)

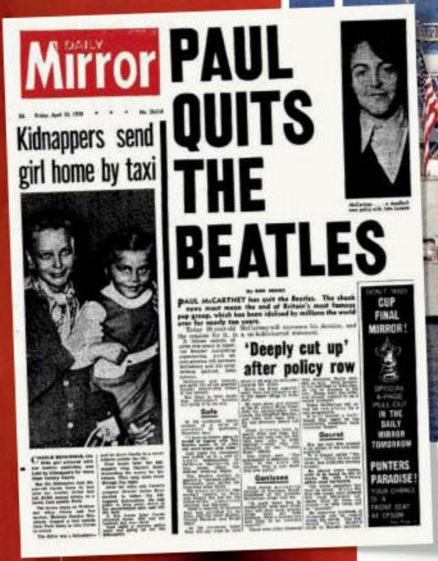
Class war anthem written about a Right To Work march disrupted by taunting Eton College cadets.

The
ETON RIFLES
THE JAM

"We had a week off and I never even thought about going abroad for a holiday at that time. So I went down to my mum and dad's caravan in Selsey and it pissed with rain for the whole week, so I just ended up writing. And I wrote Eton Rifles. I thought it was a powerful statement. The intro, *bah*, straight in, and all the feedback and fucking chaos. That's the first thing you hear and then it settles into this tune. And that was the first single that we got played on Radio 1. It went sort of stellar after that. The whole thing with [David] Cameron saying it was one of his favourite

Tom Sheehan (Shot at iconic London venue the 100 Club, http://www.the100club.co.uk), Alamy (2), Iconicpix, Mirrirpix





DAILY Mirror

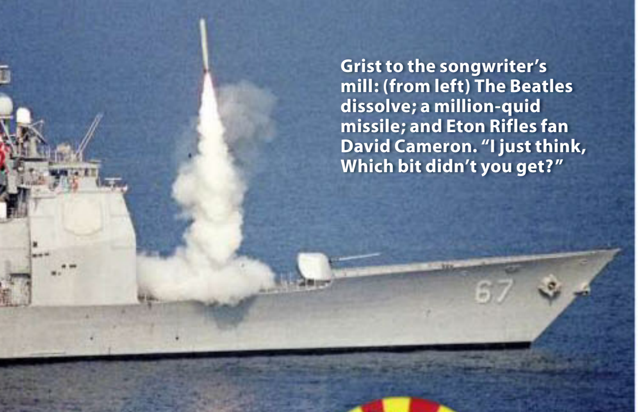
Kidnappers send girl home by taxi

PAUL QUITS THE BEATLES

'Deeply cut up' after policy row

CUP FINAL MIRROR!

PUNTERS PARADISE!



DEFINITELY
SHITE

Grist to the songwriter's mill: (from left) The Beatles dissolve; a million-quid missile; and Eton Rifles fan David Cameron. "I just think, Which bit didn't you get?"

songs… I just think, Which bit didn't you get? People say, Why don't you write any more political songs? But I would just write exactly the same fucking things I wrote 30-odd years ago. Every time they fire a missile in the Middle East, that's £850,000, right? And then they talk about the NHS, fucking selling it off or it crumbling. So nothing's really changed, has it?"

PRIVATE HELL

(*Setting Sons*, 1979)

Ray Davies-inspired portrait of a middle-aged, middle-class woman glumly floating through life on Valium.

"It was my first girlfriend's mother. I took what I thought I saw and exaggerated it and built on that. She seemed a very beaten-down, unhappy person really. Perhaps she wasn't but that's the vibe I got. I had to get two more songs to finish off *Setting Sons*, so I remember sitting in an office with just a tape recorder and a chair and a guitar. It felt a bit like the Brill Building. So I wrote Private Hell, then I wrote Girl On The Phone the same day as well. But we were still fucking short. That's why we put [Martha And The Vandellas'] Heat Wave on that album. The sound of Private Hell is quite dense. Looking back on it, Vic Smith, our producer, did a brilliant job. He taught us a lot about overdubbing, especially with my guitars. I felt like I was getting onto a different level with the lyrics as well. Bit more poetic or story-based. Trying to get inside people or characters."

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

(*Sound Affects*, 1980)

Evocative snapshots of the humdrum British everyday.

THE JAM
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

"It's one of those list songs really. It was so easy to write. I came back from the pub, drunk, and just wrote it quick. I probably had more verses, which I cut. It was just everything that was around me, y'know. My little flat in Pimlico did have damp down the walls and it was fucking freezing. I was doing a fanzine at the time called December Child and Paul Drew wrote a poem called That's Entertainment. It wasn't close to my song, but it kind of inspired me to write this anyway. I wrote to him saying, Look is it all right if I kind of nick a bit of your idea, man? And he said, It's fine, yeah. I suppose it was a little bit like the Liverpool beat poets really. The things that might seem of no importance or value, when you put them into a song, that can elevate 'em. Maybe that's why it strikes a chord with people."

BEAT SURRENDER

(Single, 1982)

Emotional farewell to The Jam and rallying call to fans.

THE JAM
BEAT
SURRENDER

"I wanted it to be a final statement on The Jam. A sort of clarion call. It was like, Right, we're stopping it – *you* take it on now. Was it emotional for me to write? Pff, not really no. 'Cos my head was in The Style Council towards the last days. I was counting down the hours and the days 'til I could crack on with that. I'd had enough. It was more emotional for other people and I felt bad about that. A lot of fans were gutted. Which I understood, 'cos I remember seeing, April 1970, 'Paul: I'm Quitting' [actually 'Paul Quits The Beatles'] on the Daily Mirror and I was fucking devastated. We did a little 20-minute set at the end of [live Channel 4 music programme] The Tube, with horns and backing singers and a keyboard player. I gave Muriel Gray a hard time during that interview? I know. But I didn't mean to. I was just lousy at doing interviews then. I wasn't trying to be an awkward fucker. I was just shy and inarticulate. I had no people skills when I was younger. It's fucking taken me years to learn bloody people skills."

LONG HOT SUMMER

(*Introducing The Style Council*, 1983)

Electronic soul swooner declaring just how different The Style Council were going to be.

The Style Council
Long Hot Summer
ロング・ホット・サマー
ザ・スタイル・カウンシル

"At the time I just wanted to make singles; I didn't wanna make an album. I thought every single could be different. We'd have different line-ups, apart from me and Mick [Talbot]. We cut four tracks in Paris. I was gonna do this series of EPs and go to a different European country every time. The next one was gonna be The Style Council Go Alpine. We were gonna go to Switzerland and get some of them big fucking trumpets they play – that would've been wicked. It's not in the same class, but you know The Isley Brothers' For The Love Of You? I think we were trying to sound a bit like that. I think I'd split up – again – with my girlfriend at the time. I'd moved out and into a hotel. ➢

The Style Council, Paris, 1986: "At the time, I just wanted to make singles."

“I WAS GONNA DO A SERIES OF EPs FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THE NEXT ONE WAS GONNA BE THE STYLE COUNCIL GO ALPINE.”

THE STYLE COUNCIL

More grist: (above, from left) The White House – bombs not pictured; policemen wrestle striking miner, during the Battle of Orgreave, 1984. "I thought it was outrageous. Fucking outrageous."

➤ Walking the streets, feeling sorry for myself. That was a good summer that year, '83. It was a big summer record."

MY EVER CHANGING MOODS

(*Café Bleu*, 1984)

Homage to Curtis Mayfield with overtones of nuclear threat. Weller's biggest US hit.

"It started from the title. I thought, What a great title, My Ever Changing Moods. But it's about nuclear holocaust as well. 'The hush before the silence, the winds after the blast' and all that. I think it's probably like a lot of songs I've done… they start off being about myself and then I get bored with it and I make it into something else. Was it Top 30 in America? Fuck knows how that happened. I love playing there, but I don't have any ambition – obviously at my age now – to 'make it' there. It was never top of my list, man. It's not a putdown to the American people. It's just you've got to kiss an awful lot of arse to make it there. *Café Bleu* was renamed *My Ever Changing Moods* over there? Is that what they called it? My idea was to call it *Dropping Bombs On The White House*, which didn't go down very well..."

A STONES THROW AWAY

(*Our Favourite Shop*, 1985)

An Eleanor Rigby lament for the South Yorkshire miners.

THE STYLE COUNCIL/OUR FAVOURITE SHOP

"Again it was just what was going on really. These people who'd been working down the pits and keeping the country going… all of a sudden being fucking hit around the head by the Met Police. I just thought it was outrageous. Fucking outrageous. And at the same time, there were pictures coming back from Johannesburg, the riots and the fucking treatment of people there. I name a few places in that song – South Yorkshire, Johannesburg, Chile. I like that whole album, *Our Favourite Shop*. I thought it was a great record. I've not heard it for donkeys, but there were some good songs on that, I thought. Good political songs as well." ➤

Tom Sheehan (Shot at iconic London venue the 100 Club, http://www.the100club.co.uk), Alamy (2)

Crown Limited Records
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT
DAVID SEA

A MAN OF GREAT PROMISE

(*Our Favourite Shop*, 1985)

Mixed emotion elegy for original Jam member Dave Waller, who died of a heroin overdose.

"He was very, very into drugs and he was a very literary sort of person. He'd read a lot. He put us onto Dylan and Donovan, saying, 'You've gotta listen to these words,' which we never really thought about before. He was a really good poet himself and he probably could've done something, I think. But he fell victim to smack. It's like he was destined to do that, really. Even when we were at school, he was reading William Burroughs' Junkie. He was just too heavily into it. But it was a waste and I think really that's what the song's about: this life, this potential, has been snuffed out. But it says 'like a moth going to a flame'… He kind of knew what he was getting into. He'd go up to Waterloo, buy a fix and come back and we'd be in the pub and he would be like (*mimes nodding out*). I just thought, Is that good? I dunno. It don't look too good. Not everybody makes it through, do they?"

Junkie
William Burroughs

IT DIDN'T MATTER

(*The Cost Of Loving*, 1987)

Jam & Lewis-smooth R&B, as heard in The Style Council's unhinged film, Jerusalem.

THE STYLE COUNCIL

"It was a bit of a nick really from a David Sea track called Night After Night [1984]. I was trying to do this modern soul thing, like these independent soul records which sounded quite cheap in a way. We had our Solid Bond Studios in Marble Arch, which used to be the old Philips studio. I think I was too young and too arrogant to really appreciate the fact that Scott Walker and Dusty had made records in this place. Beautiful old gear in there, which we took out because of the '80s and all this new technology that was coming in. After a while, we just ended up making records in the control room. We never used this beautiful live space. Fucking mad that was really. (*Grins*) Jerusalem… fucking what a film, mate! We were trying to make our Magical Mystery Tour and I think we succeeded on that level. It was our state of the nation address. But people didn't get it. Our sense of humour didn't always translate 'cos we were just piss-takers. Some of the acting's appalling, innit. I've not made a film since. The acting career was over after that. Fucking ruined me."

A NEW DECADE

(*Modernism: A New Decade*, 1989. Released: 1998)

Deep house collage which opened the rejected final Style Council album.

THE STYLE COUNCIL MODERNISM: A NEW DECADE

"I first heard house around '88. Norman Jay did a night at Dingwalls, playing these soulful house records, but in amongst Philly things and some disco. It all made sense, new and old kind of mixed in together. And then I was just buying imports. Being the Mod I am, I thought it was the same as someone in 1962 or whatever buying the new soul imports. I didn't do ecstasy at that time, no. I probably should've done really. Probably would've helped me in lots of ways. Polydor were like, 'Nah this is gonna finish your career off.' I don't think they wanted to pay the money, really. And that was the end of The Style Council. We just fizzled out. The band was everything to me up to that point. I was fucking besotted with it. But we'd all lost interest. Us and the audience. I think our very insular, piss-taking nature just kind of went against us after a while."

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

(*Paul Weller*, 1992)

Acute crisis of confidence expressed in floaty soul ballad.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS
PAUL WELLER

"I was in my early thirties by that time. And I guess after being dropped and not having a band, it was probably the first time I really stood still and took stock of, Where am I? How have I got to this point? And where am I going from here? All those big questions which you face at some time in your life. Didn't have any songs. Didn't want to fucking write. I didn't give a shit about any of it. I tried to play guitar at home and it just was like… it was gone, fucking gone. And it was only through work, going out on the road, starting again, really, that I got

Tom Sheehan (Shot at iconic London venue the 100 Club, http://www.the100club.co.uk), Courtesy of Steve Brookes (2)

back into it. Found my muse and found the value in what I was doing. And songs just started to happen again, they started to flow. And there was no stopping me after that.”

HUNG UP

(Single, 1994)

Echoes of A Day In The Life in this lyrically skin-shedding beauty.

paul
weller
hung
up

“‘Just like a soldier from my past, who won’t be told it’s over yet/Refusing to lay down his gun, he’ll keep on fighting ’til his war is won.’ Yeah, just fucking let this shit go. Anything that bugs you or whatever, just let it go. Today’s a new day. Start again. Start afresh. It was along those lines really. We only ever played that song once correctly and that was on that record. We tried playing it live and it was never any good and I don’t know why that was. It was just a moment and a mood. I was wracked with self-doubt, which is mentioned in quite a few of the songs then. But that kind of went as soon as I felt I was getting back on the track. I really think I was back on top of my game around that time, but then I messed up with my marriage with Dee [C. Lee] and fucked that all up. Just ’cos I was into this touring, playing, partying thing.”

PORCELAIN GODS

(*Stanley Road*, 1995)

To Be Someone viewed from the other side of the fame mirror.

PAUL WELLER
STANLEY ROAD

“It’s got that cocaine paranoia thing going on. Great fucking song, if I may say so. I wanted it to be a kind of modern blues. I found it a bit weird, that time. All of a sudden I seemed to be elevated to this fucking star thing. You never live up to people’s expectations when they have this sort of starry notion about you. It’s got a lot of references: ‘Too much will kill you, too little ain’t enough.’ Could be about gear, or it could be about fame. Again, it’s me just thinking out loud really. I felt bonkers, man. Fucking barmy. Not as barmy as [Noel] Gallagher makes out. But I was pretty far out really. I was in a hell of my own making and no one else to blame whatsoever. I felt guilty about splitting up with Dee and my family and all that. And my way of coping with it was just to dive into a fucking bottle of rum and a gramme of coke or whatever. Which only added to the feeling of… self-loathing really. We still play that tune and I think it’s still as powerful.” ➢

DIDN’T WE HAVE A NICE TIME?

The Jam’s Fourth Man, STEVE BROOKES, remembers Paul Weller’s musical baby steps, 40 years after their paths diverged.

I met Paul Weller in the playground at Sheerwater County Secondary School in late ’71 when we were both 13. My family had just moved to Woking so I was the new boy at school. A kid called Roger Pilling introduced us, he thought we’d get on and we did – the moment we found out we were both interested in playing the guitar. That was the glue. I would go round his house, he’d come round mine and we’d sit trying to work out different chords in our bedrooms, I’d learn something new and show it to him; he’d learn something new and show it to me. It was a very organic process. It helped we shared the same sense of humour. We were really into Monty Python, we made up our own characters and had a secret language. We used code words that no one else could understand.

Me and Paul talked about forming a band from day one, we were both very confident of success despite being beginners on the guitar. I was the outgoing one, Paul was very shy, but he had a cockiness where playing and performing was concerned. He had real self-belief.

We modelled the idea of the band on The Beatles’ line-up; Paul was keen to play bass as Paul McCartney was his idol. I was to play guitar, and we would get in another guitarist and a drummer, that was the plan. We were consumed by it all even at this initial stage when it was just the two of us. We talked about what our first album would be like, the songs on it, the sleeve artwork, what we would wear, and especially where we wanted to go with it. We wanted to be as popular as The Beatles, to emulate them.

We played a lot of covers. We learned them out of Paul’s Beatles Songbook, then we backtracked, and started discovering Tamla Motown and Chuck Berry and rock’n’roll through the covers they did. Rock’n’roll was undergoing a renaissance at the time, Chuck Berry and Little Richard were touring the UK so it felt very current and new rather than a retro thing.

Ann and John Weller, Paul’s mum and dad, used to take us to the local pubs in Woking – like the Albion and the working men’s club. They had bands on, we’d get up and guest with them whenever they’d let us, we’d do a Beatles song or a Chuck Berry song, and the audience was always very kind to us, they liked to see young kids up on the stage.

John was very supportive from the start. He was the one who held it all together, he steered us. He obviously enjoyed our company too. He was always laughing with us – he used to say, “You’re cracked in the head.” He took care of the practicalities, too. We were too young to drive so he’d take us and our equipment to gigs. He’d book the gigs, too. He was always pushing us.

We started writing our own songs from day one, and as soon as we got Rick Buckler in on drums [Dave Waller also played guitar], we started putting them in our live set. We got our inspiration from everything and anything. I remember one day in summer, Paul couldn’t sleep, it was really hot and at 5am we walked barefoot through the streets to the park. There was no one else around, it seemed magical with the first rays of the sun coming up. It fired our imaginations.

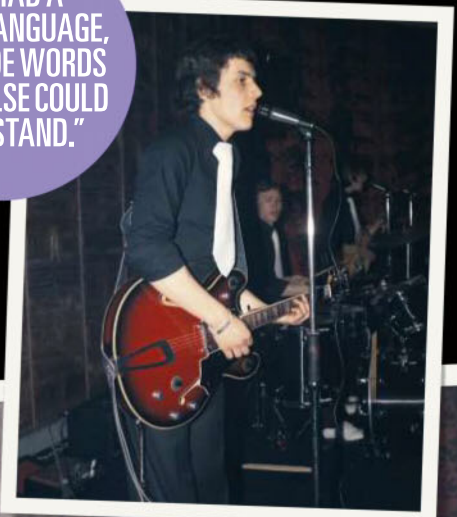
We wrote a whole bunch of original songs. Takin’ My Love and Blueberry Rock were the ones we recorded at our first recording session in August 1973 at Eden Studios in Kingston. The studio was small, very cramped, there were steep stairs leading up to it so it was difficult getting the equipment in. We had cross words, it didn’t look like we were going to get Takin’ My Love down, we were off-kilter with one another on the vocals. The engineer suggested we hold hands while we were singing so we could feel what each other was doing. We were sceptical but John said to give it a try and we did and we got it done. No one picked up on the demo, though.

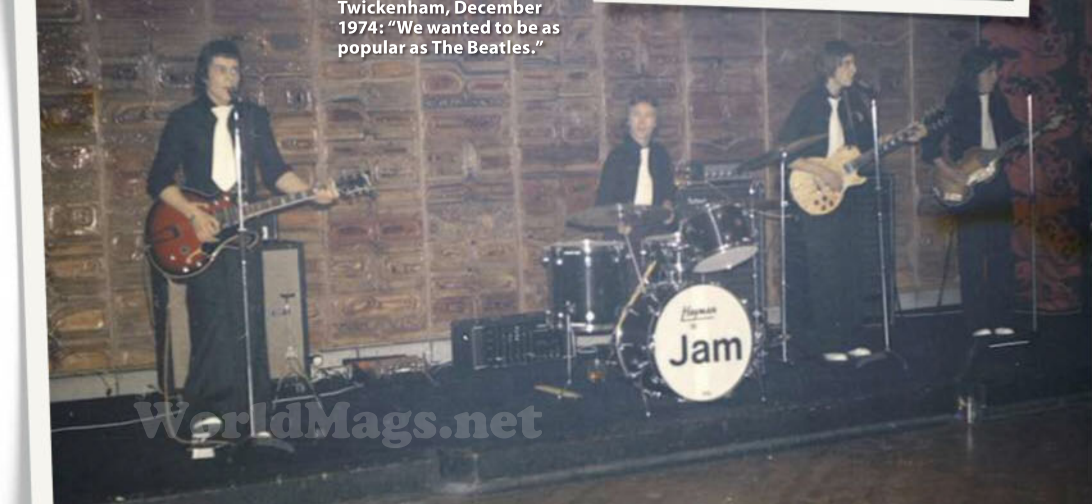
I left the band in July ’75. I was 17. I’d spent four years in the band, over a quarter of my life – that seemed like a phenomenally long time back then. We’d started out as young boys, we were becoming young men, and we were striking out in different ways. Paul was getting more and more obsessed with The Who and Small Faces and the whole Mod thing and I wasn’t. I was still into our melodic ‘old wave’ Beatles thing. I never regretted the decision.

We remained friends, though. His studio’s not far from where I live and I go over for a cup of tea or a curry every now and again. He’ll play a song and say, “Have a go on this.” I played Spanish guitar on One Bright Star on *22 Dreams*, I’m uncredited on Find The Torch, Burn The Plans on *Wake Up The Nation*, and I play on a couple of tracks on *Saturns Pattern*. It’s very loose and laidback – no time to prepare. He likes it spontaneous.

As told to Lois Wilson.

> “WE HAD A SECRET LANGUAGE, USED CODE WORDS NO ONE ELSE COULD UNDERSTAND.”

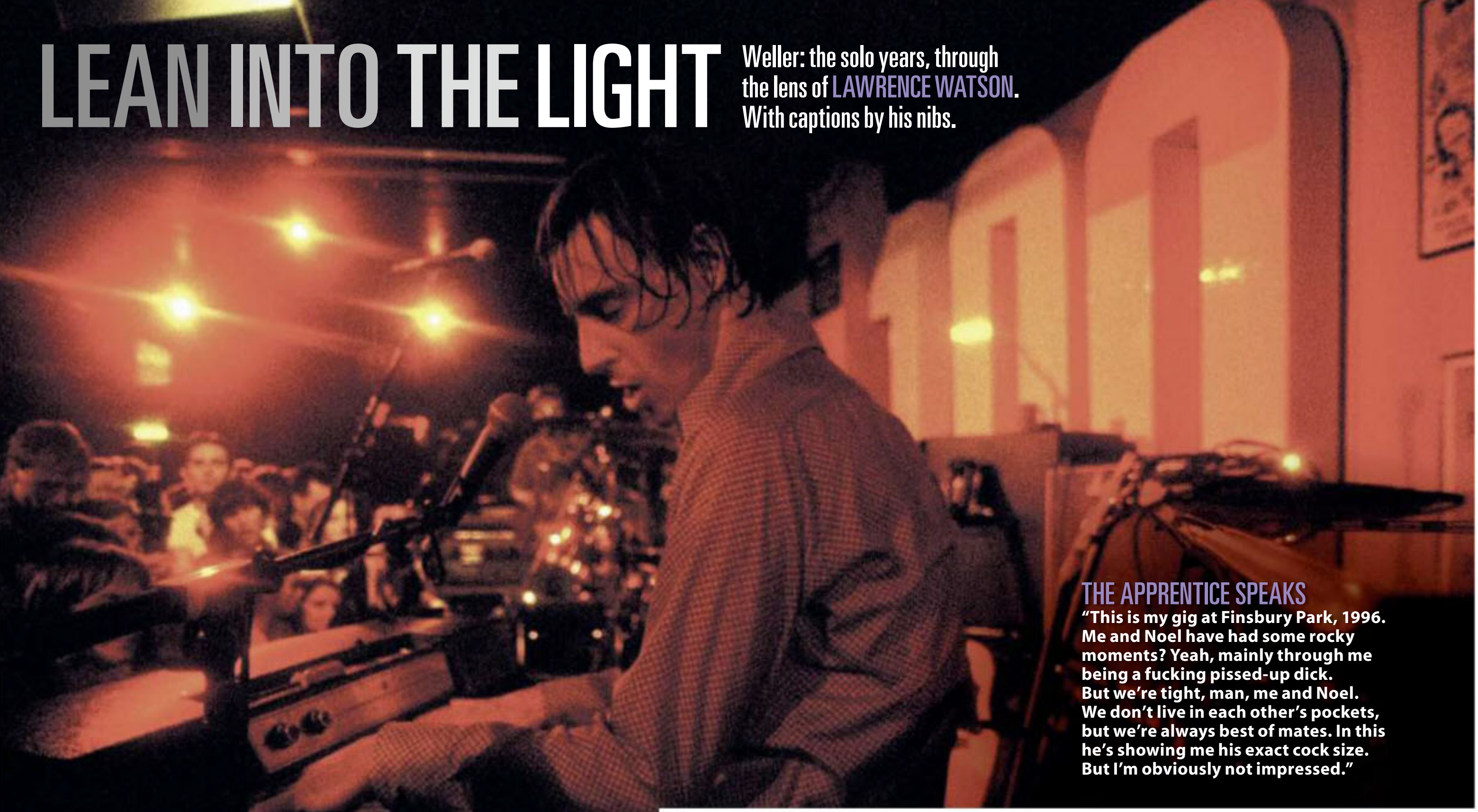




Steve Brookes (far left and above) in the four-piece Jam at the Winning Post, Twickenham, December 1974: “We wanted to be as popular as The Beatles.”

LEAN INTO THE LIGHT

Weller: the solo years, through the lens of LAWRENCE WATSON. With captions by his nibs.



BACK AT THE 100 CLUB, 1995

"It was a good time. I was finding my feet again, getting confident, people were excited again. 'Cos for a long time it just seemed really not happening at all."

THE APPRENTICE SPEAKS

"This is my gig at Finsbury Park, 1996. Me and Noel have had some rocky moments? Yeah, mainly through me being a fucking pissed-up dick. But we're tight, man, me and Noel. We don't live in each other's pockets, but we're always best of mates. In this he's showing me his exact cock size. But I'm obviously not impressed."

YOU NEED WHEELS, 1995

"That's on Margate beach. What the shoot's for I've no idea. I'm looking at something or other or picking me nails or doing the usual bored fucking thing. Go! Discs did three different scooters themed from the artwork for my first three albums. I think I had this one, but we gave it to a charity or something."

STANLEY ROAD
KINETIC ART

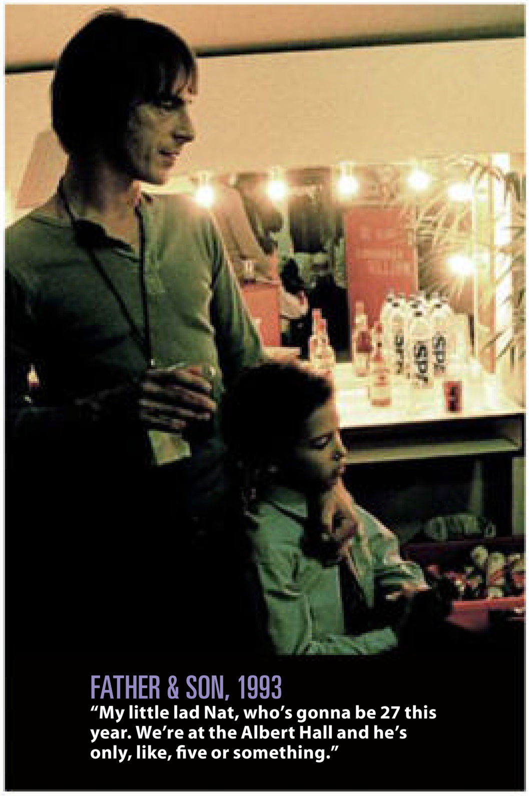
ABBEY ROAD, STUDIO 2 C.1994

"It's a lovely room but it's not like you put the faders up and instantly you've got this fantastic sound. You've got to work at it. That's what you discover there. Later, I did that thing with Macca and Noel there for Warchild [The Smokin' Mojo Filters' Come Together]."

FUJI RHP
RHP ◘ 15
RHP ◘ 14

MANOR FROM HEAVEN, 1994

"We're filming the video for Hung Up. I think I was fucking worse for wear that day 'cos I'd been at it. The Manor [fabled studio complex near Oxford] was just magical – like being in a bubble, in those lovely grounds and nice old house. All you had was music and partying at night time."



FATHER & SON, 1993

"My little lad Nat, who's gonna be 27 this year. We're at the Albert Hall and he's only, like, five or something."

INTO TOMORROW
PAUL WELLER
INTO TOMORROW

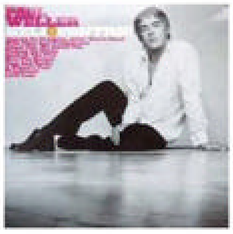
INTO TOMORROW BY PAUL WELLER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE WATSON

The signed limited edition book of 2,000 copies from www.WellerBook.com, Tel: +44 (0)1483 540 970, Price £325

LOVE-LESS

(*Heliocentric*, 2000)

Spiritual yearner with ornate strings and brass arrangement by the late Robert Kirby.

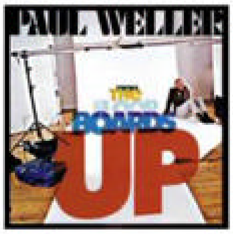


"It was about God. It was at a very low time in my life and it was about me trying to say, Send me something, send me a sign. The great party atmosphere that we had going on had to stop at some point. And someone had to clear all the fucking empty tins away. It was the come-down from all that soaring. *Heliocentric*, even though I like some of the tunes on it, it was like pulling teeth, making that fucking record. It just went on forever. If I think of God at all, I think of it as definitely in nature and the planet and the universe. I find, more and more, I'm less tolerant about organised religion."

FROM THE FLOORBOARDS UP

(*As Is Now*, 2005)

Two-and-a-half-minute groover buzzing with the ongoing thrill of live performance.

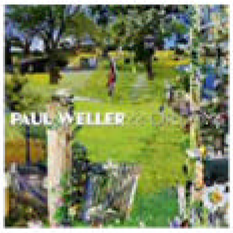


"I wrote that coming straight off a gig, in a hotel in Glasgow. We'd just played Barrowlands and it was fucking rocking there as usual. And then the next day we were in Manchester or somewhere, and we did a little demo in the dressing room, and then I think we played it the next night. It's also about how, if you believe in it anyway, the sort of soul that gets infused into things. 'I get a feeling from the walls and chairs'... I was thinking of a theatre and all those arses that have sat in them seats and all the good times, bad times or whatever, that have gone on. All the bands that have played there. The love that was there for everyone. That soul and energy... those things don't disappear."

BLACK RIVER

(*22 Dreams*, 2008)

Acoustic drifter with shades of Nick Drake and Robert Wyatt. Inspired by Herman Hesse's Siddhartha.

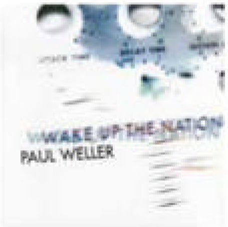


"It was definitely a different mood on *22 Dreams*. I was coming up to my 50th birthday and it was like I was going to make the most indulgent record I could possibly make, just as a little birthday present to myself. And it just kept growing and growing and getting more sprawling. And people, surprisingly, loved that record. They got it and they dug it. I wrote the last verse of this out the back of my garden. It was pissing with rain and I was standing outside smoking, drinking, whatever I was doing. And I was watching this rain just dripping off the leaves of this rubber plant. Anyway, for me, it was a beautiful moment. Again, it's going back to nature and the elements. The whole image of the river that's moving and changing, yet it appears to be the same. It's just a lovely image, I thought."

TREES

(*Wake Up The Nation*, 2010)

Song cycle written after Weller visited his ailing dad in a respite home.

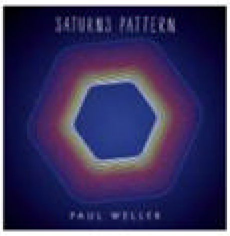


"It wasn't just about my dad. I remember seeing these old ladies there who looked like petrified trees. And then on their doors, I guess to help them try and remember, there were pictures of them as young people. So they were the same as all of us – they were lovers, mothers. And in death, y'know, one would hope they get freed from that fucking prison they're trapped in, and released back into the universe. That's my belief anyway. The last four or five years of my dad's life were really fucking painful for him. Not just physically but mentally as well, 'cos he had some form of dementia. The physical being was there but the soul or the person had gone. I find it interesting to see how people deal with grief [John Weller died from pneumonia in 2009]. I was very strong and practical about it, which is probably like he was really. I'm the son of my father. I dream about him sometimes and in my dreams he's kind of as he used to be. It's like a little visitation from him. He lives on in me, he lives on in my children."

GOING MY WAY

(*Saturns Pattern*, 2015)

Gold standard Weller love song, in multiple movements, for wife Hannah.



"It's hard to write a good love song, without it being slushy and clichéd. It's probably all been said before, but we're trying to find ways of retelling the story. I love this one. I think the whole sound and arrangement on it makes it for me. I wrote it on the piano, and it's something that I'd been working on for at least a year. It's a straightforward love song, but it's got some other little abstract bits in it as well. That line, 'time passing by, time on the wind'... that's just laziness to be honest with you (*grins*). I couldn't think of anything else to put. But, I mean, I could count on two hands, or maybe three hands, the amount of my songs that I think are absolutely perfect – I couldn't have done anything different, I wouldn't change a thing. Going My Way is one of them." ➢

©Lawrence Watson (6)

"Intense" in Portsmouth, March 7, 2014, with (above, centre) mother Ann; (left, centre) bassist Andy Lewis and drummer Steve Pilgrim; plus (bottom, left) stalwart Steve Cradock.

"ONCE I WAS ON-STAGE, IT WAS, THIS IS WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO BE."

IT'S 11 DAYS AFTER OUR 100 CLUB MEETING AND WELLER sits in his dressing room at Portsmouth's Guildhall, sporting a black three-button jersey and two-tone dogtooth "strides" (from his Real Stars Are Rare range), scanning the 24-song setlist that's Blu-Tacked to his mirror. Along the corridor, Tamla sounds emanate from the larger room, where some light alcoholic refreshment is being enjoyed as his bandmates gear themselves up for stage-time. Weller's spry mother Ann appears in her son's dressing room. "You want a drink, Mum?" he asks her, before fetching a can of Guinness.

Weller is three dates into a tour which pre-empts the May release of *Saturns Pattern* and takes in towns often forgotten on the live circuit: Swindon, Watford, Scunthorpe, Halifax. "You get a different vibe when you go back to places where people really don't see that many bands," he points out, puffing on an indoor snout.

In Europe, some of the venues where he performs don't have crash barriers, so he finds himself even closer to the crowd. "You have people leaning on the front of the stage," he says. "Looking up, putting their drinks and their handbags on it. I fucking love that."

At the end of this year, Weller will play a bigger arena and theatre tour, though he'll still be holding the frills and fripperies. "No backdrops and all that stuff," he states. "I want it to be *intense* and just about us and the music." Even after all these years, he admits, there are opening night nerves: "I think, I dunno if I can still do it. Even the other night at Plymouth… But once I was on-stage, it was, This is where I'm fucking supposed to be."

Performing entirely sober, he says, felt strange at first. "I felt very self-conscious. I've lost that now and I've got a different perspective on it. I'm more present. I can see what's going on. And playing and singing better as well. 'Cos I wouldn't be *pissed* going on-stage, but I'd still be hungover from the night before. You just top yourself up from the last night and you get sloppy."

Tonight, meanwhile, come 8.45pm and stage time, Weller and his five-piece band (only surviving member from yore: the perennial Steve Cradock) are on cracking form. While the previously "altered" singer could sometimes be a frenetically guitar-slashing presence, tonight he seems more lucid and controlled, if no less thrilling.

"Any sailors here tonight?" he enquires with a grin, before ushering in the Marvin Gaye-fronts-the-Avalanches dream soul of Empty Ring from *22 Dreams*. Four songs from *Saturns Pattern* get an airing, including the Traffic-ish grooving of the title track and the slowly-unfurling reverie of These City Streets.

Afterwards, MOJO mentions that Noel Gallagher has been quoted saying that Weller had played him the latter track and Gallagher had apparently told him it was "too long".

"He never said anything of the sort, mate," Weller laughs. "Bless his heart, man. He might have thought it, but he never said it."

Closing *Saturns Pattern* over eight minutes-odd, These City Streets offers yet more evidence of the 21st century Weller's desire to venture further out there. Always looking to the future, he plays MOJO studio roughs of two new tracks on his dressing room boombox. Cue the "hard soul, heavy disco" of New York and the piano, drums and vocal sparseness of the enigmatic The Cranes Are Back, which, MOJO ventures, has a bit of a *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* vibe. "Yeah," Weller nods. "Bit like Mother or something."

And so, it almost goes without saying, the Paul Weller songbook is still very much an unfinished opus. "Whenever I'm starting a record, it always feels insurmountable," he offers. "Then all of a sudden, before you know it, you've got six songs on the go." Ⓜ

Nic Serpell-Rand (6)

MOJO FILTER

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> "One year we're kicking ass, the next we're eating dirt."
> JIM JAMES PHILOSOPHISES. ALBUMS P86

RATINGS & FORMATS

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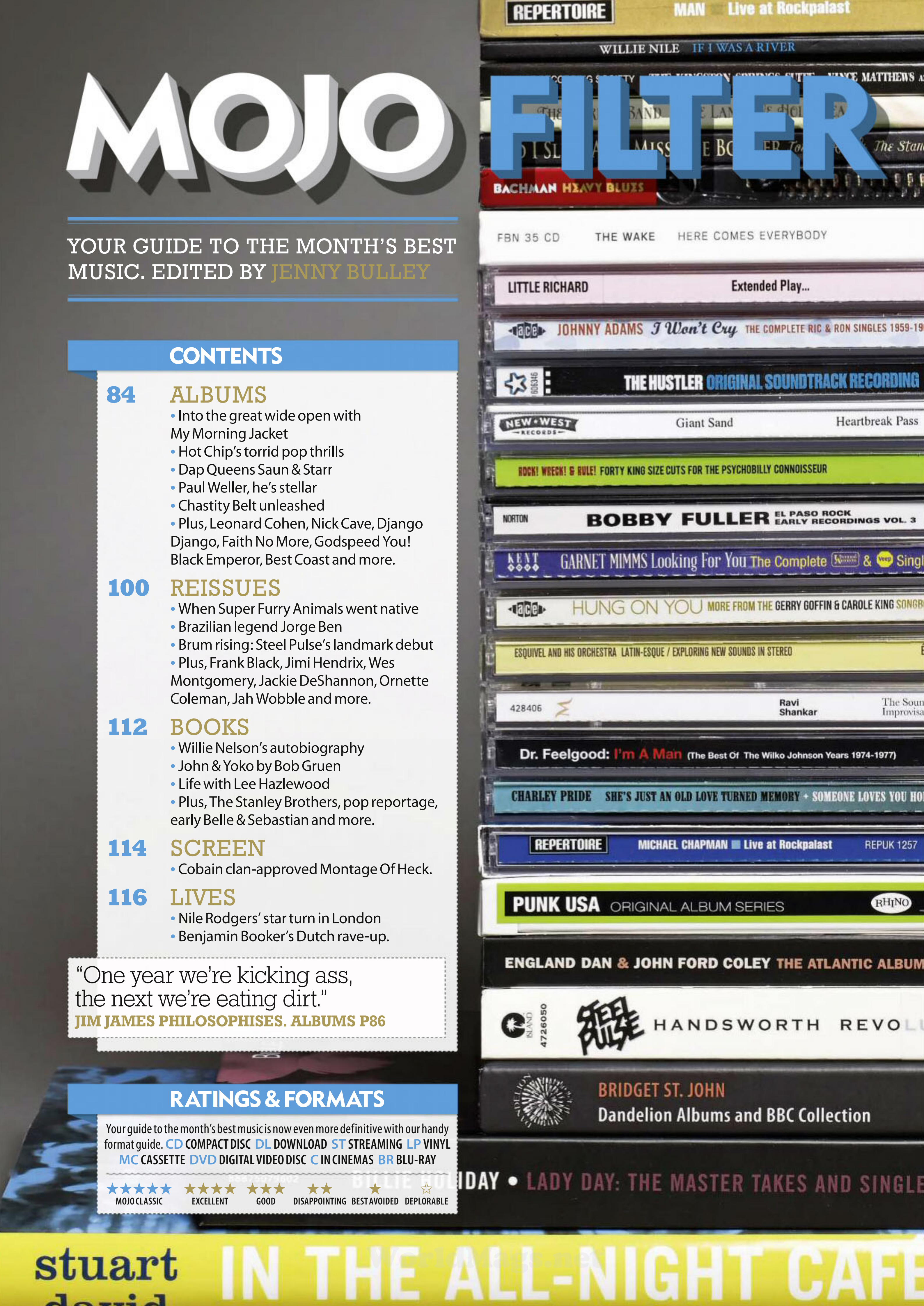
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stuart david IN THE ALL-NIGHT CAFE

Hello birds, hello trees

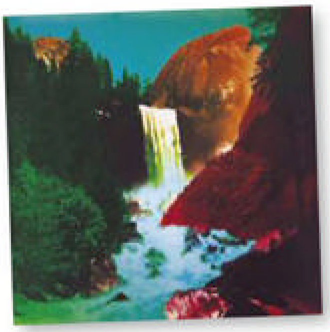
After 15 years, six albums and hundreds of gigs, the 21st century space cowboys confirm their cosmic legend. By Keith Cameron. Illustration by Dan Craig.

My Morning Jacket

★★★★

The Waterfall

ATO/CAPITOL. CD/DL/LP



Eight tracks into the seventh My Morning Jacket album sits Big Decisions, the song charged with heralding the record; in old parlance, the first single. It's already suitably auspicious, rent asunder by stentorian guitar riffing, before Jim James's opening lyric: "Sitting round wondering just what the hell to do with your life/Only get one chance – but you seem to always think twice." Building to its accusatory chorus, the obvious interpretation has the singer addressing a (presumably soon-to-be-ex) lover. Or perhaps the enemy lies within. Amid the hooks and horns of My Morning Jacket's most instantly appealing song in recent times, a vision emerges: of James singing to the mirror.

Over 15 years, My Morning Jacket have attained considerable status without a breakthrough hit. Instead, their accretion of a solid fanbase, although doubtless helped by Jim James's extra-curricular projects (most recently T Bone Burnett's Dylanology exercise *The New Basement Tapes*), is due to industrial levels of road haulage, six-month tours stoking a live show that's become the stuff of legend: gonzoid virtuoso blowouts undercut by emotive ensemble power. Thus, the last My Morning Jacket album, 2011's *Circuital*, without the remotest whiff of a radio-friendly unit shifter, entered the US Billboard chart at Number 5: decent work for an uncategorisable group of longhairs from Kentucky.

Yet there's a lingering sense that the band could make life easier for themselves if they delivered a record that pandered just a touch to the wider world's base desires. Not since 2005's *Z* has there been a consistently lucid expression of the quintet's intense psychedelic rock, country, folk and soul gumbo. Who knows how a second record with *Z*'s producer John Leckie might have sounded. Instead, MMJ made *Evil Urges*: a wilful exercise in confounding expectations, it eschewed cosmic balladry in favour of an authentically felt R&B fetish. Although eccentricity had always been integral to the band's appeal, fan forbearance met its limit in the groinal falsetto funk of Highly Suspicious. Subsequently, though often brilliant, *Circuital* was more cabinet of curiosities than an enduring monolithic statement. Did it matter? Perhaps My Morning Jacket records functioned primarily as summons to gather for those ecstatic communal exchanges, where James's extraordinary voice becomes a conduit for the spiritual marrow that contemporary rock so palpably lacks. Yet having survived a near fatal heart condition in 2005 and a calamitous stage fall when touring *Evil Urges*, you have to wonder how long the singer will acquiesce to the primacy of one night stands.

The Waterfall suggests My Morning Jacket have made their own big decision. It's coherent without sacrificing quirk and charm. Though far from prosaic, the album affirms essential truths: mainly, it's OK for your keyboards to sound like late-'70s Genesis so long as you have songs as indelible as Compound Fracture, a stoned Pacific Coast Highway cruise worthy of Jackson Browne. As on Big Decisions, the lyric is direct: "There's no evil, there's no good/Only people doin' as they should… Get as much as you can keep around/Before they put you in the ground." Haunted by James's 2008 accident, with its lush string undertow and a judicious dusting of hallmark JJ curlicues, there's AOR radio gold dust caked into the dashboard.

That mellow soon gets harshed, however, as not-so-gentleman Jim dishes it with both barrels on Get The Point, an end-of-the-affair lyric that's almost comically blunt. "Day dreamin' of leavin' – I only had to do it." That the accompaniment is James's pedal-steel acoustic heartland tuned to Jim Croce levels of perfection merely heightens the impact. The *carpe diem* subtext also extends to more readily familiar MMJ tropes, like tricksily time-signatured opener Believe (Nobody Knows), where James marvels: "My mind is open – my oh my!" It's one of two key songs – the other being Big Decisions – recorded back home in Louisville, after the main session in California had yielded enough material for two albums. That more work was deemed necessary is suggestive of a certain collective resolve.

At 10 adroitly sequenced songs clocking in at just under 49 minutes – brusque by MMJ standards – *The Waterfall* acknowledges temptation but never yields to those evil urges. Even amid its fluffy ornamentation, producer Tucker Martine spikes the players' innately epic capabilities with a puritan elixir. The rewards are considerable, like Thin Line, a Pink Floyd-referencing swoon, where James's falsetto soars are countered by a hard rockin' essence du Freebird, or the spartan whirr of Only Memories Remain, a worthy finale and perhaps the greatest MMJ Southern soul homage yet, as the essence of Timmy Thomas's Why Can't We Live Together ghost dances with Fleetwood Mac's Albatross, a guitar gently weeping for eternity as Jim James looks to the light: "Our earthly bodies will surely fall/But the love we share outlives us all."

The decisive litmus for the record's efficacy is how even amidst heartland territory there's no resort to rote gestures. Spring (Among The Living) is the sort of airship-scale wild-eyed Southern rock pounding that harks back to their mythic roots, synapses fried on the natural reverb generated by a Shelbyville KY farm's grain silo… only now the awesome power is theirs to control at will. Finally, My Morning Jacket are the masters of their own universe. "I didn't think I'd make it," admits James, exultant amid the mayhem, before hooting at the multi-tracked wordless wonder of it all.

KEY TRACKS

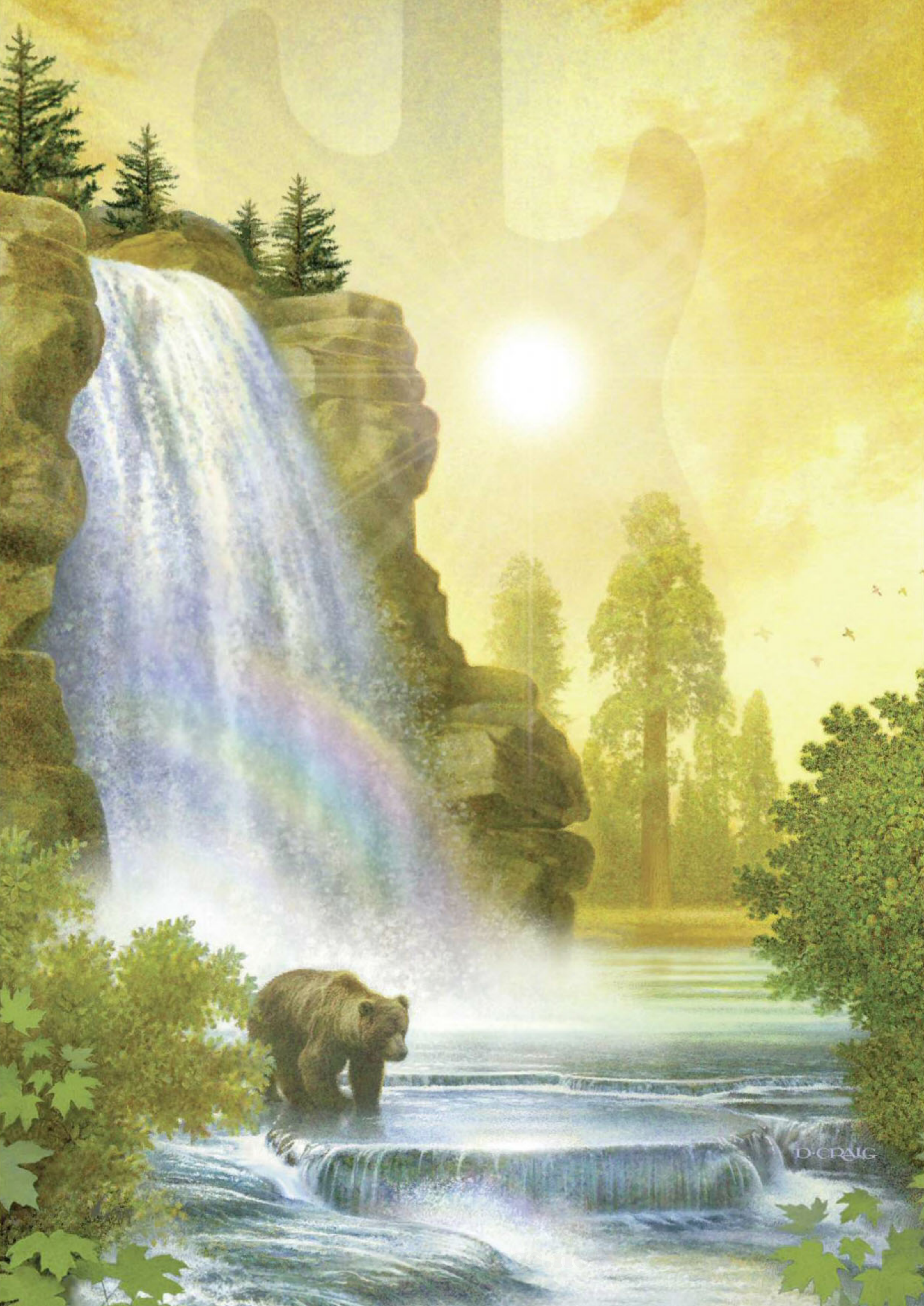
- Compound Fracture
- Spring (Among The Living)
- Big Decisions
- Only Memories Remain

"IT'S OK FOR YOUR KEYBOARDS TO SOUND LIKE LATE-'70S GENESIS, SO LONG AS YOU HAVE SONGS AS INDELIBLE AS THESE."

BACK STORY: INTO DEEPER WATER

There might have been a four-year gap between *The Waterfall* and its predecessor *Circuital*, but My Morning Jacket fans won't have to wait quite as long for the follow-up. So prolific were the recording sessions at Panoramic House Studio in Stinson Beach, north of San Francisco, that a double album was considered, before the band elected to save a raft of songs for release next year. "It's not Part 1 and Part 2, they're different records for sure," says MMJ singer Jim James. "It's 80 per cent done. I liked the idea of putting out another record quicker. That's the goal."

JIM TALKS! MJJ'S MR JAMES ON HEALTH ISSUES, STINSON BEACH AND THE WATERFALL AS METAPHOR…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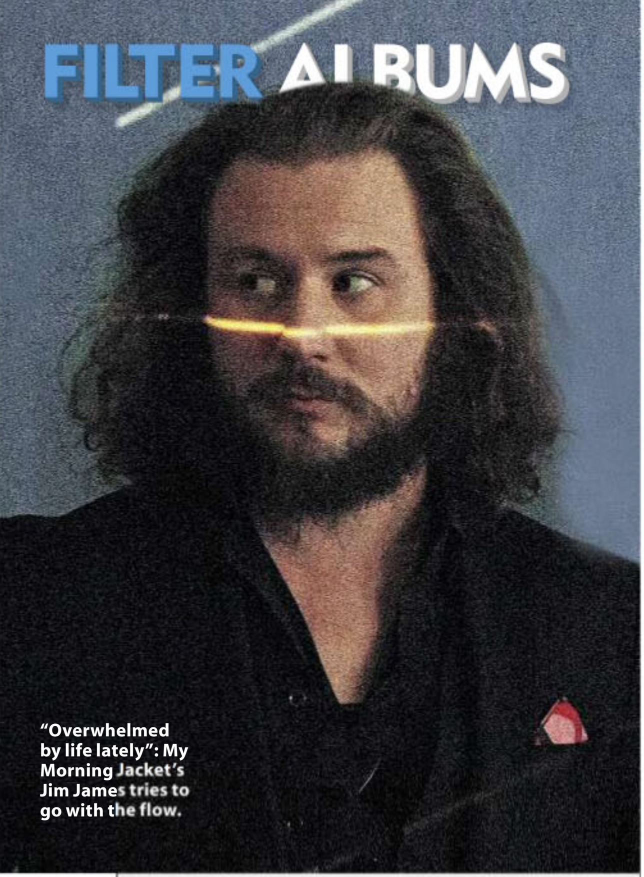


"Overwhelmed by life lately": My Morning Jacket's Jim James tries to go with the flow.

"We created a little universe."

My Morning Jacket's Jim James talks to Keith Cameron.

Around the release of your solo album in 2013, you said you had a great new sonic vision for the next MMJ album. Is this it?

"*(Laughs)* Parts of it are. I think we've accomplished what I wanted to accomplish, but not in the same way I thought we would. It turned out a different beast."

So what have you accomplished?

"Hopefully we created a little universe when we went to Stinson Beach to make the record. You know how we live on the Earth but sometimes you feel like you're a figure on top of a globe? Literally standing on top of the sky? Stinson Beach feels like that to me. The air really went into what we made. Some of our albums have been intentionally scattered or crazy, all over the place, and other times we've tried to make a more concise statement. With this one we've done the best job so far of making our own little self-sufficient universe, where you can live in it, and it's not too long, not too short, concise but also wandering, psychedelic but also straightforward. So I feel very proud of it."

Do you regard a waterfall as a potent metaphor for the journey of life?

"It just felt right. We mixed the record in Portland, Oregon, with Tucker Martine, and there's a scenic drive out there where you pass lots of waterfalls. Whenever I stand in front of a waterfall, I try to pause it in my mind, then rewind it and make it go backwards. But obviously you can't do that. I've felt really overwhelmed by life lately, like there's this waterfall of constant activity, constant demands, constant stuff… and it's just like you want to pause it. But you can't, so you somehow have to get into a flow and go with it, try to live the best you can."

I took Compound Fracture as referencing your accident in 2008. Are you still dealing with the ramifications of that?

"I've dealt with a lot of health issues from touring, it really sucks and I don't want to dwell on that or broadcast it. The falling off the stage thing had to be broadcast, because we had to cancel so many tour dates. But the details of that experience have affected me so deeply and always will. We go through cycles of health. One year we're kicking ass and the next year we're eating dirt."

Danny Clinch

Leonard Cohen

★★★★

Can't Forget: A Souvenir Of The Grand Tour

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Ten songs, several of them rarities, recorded on-stage.

Cohen's second release since last September's platinum *Popular Problems* is, like its predecessor, a live album from his 2012-13 tour after the release of *Old Ideas*. But unlike the four-disc, full-concert *Live In Dublin*, this single album was recorded in various countries and times, and not always during the show. Cohen's soundchecks, as lengthy as the shows, where he'd experiment with old songs and try out new ones, were celebrated by insiders, and the three examples here are among the highlights: a remarkable Field Commander Cohen, like a four-and-a-half-minute operetta; a cover of George Jones's Choices (with gorgeous fiddle); and a new Cohen original, the up-tempo blues Got A Little Secret. The performance numbers – all featuring Cohen in excellent voice – include Stages, an anecdote on ageing that turns into a bluesy Tower Of Song; Never Gave Nobody Trouble, a previously unreleased, down-tempo blues, and La Manic, by Québécois chansonnier Georges Dor.

Sylvie Simmons

Mumford & Sons

★★

Wilder Mind

ISLAND. CD /DL/LP

Change of direction anything but radical for the craft-beer rockers.

They might have thought they were being winsomely self-mocking, but the video for 2013 single Hopeless Wanderer must have made Mumford & Sons a little warier about pursuing their Hunter-booted muse much further into the long grass. After their American comedian stand-ins (including Jasons Sudeikis and Bateman) romped in barns, emoted in fields and capered with banjos and striped waistcoats, it would have been tough for the band to return to their artisanal farm produce shtick and be taken half as seriously as they were with 2012's *Babel*. Chiming with Marcus Mumford's avowed love of The War On Drugs, *Wilder Mind* shuns acoustic instruments and turns electric. It's not quite as revolutionary as Dylan-in-'65's rupture, though: without their banjos-and-bunting USP, their similarities with Coldplay and Kings Of Leon are accentuated, Ditmas and The Wolf turning up the earnest Transatlantic bluster until any finer points are blotted out. Far from electrifying.

Victoria Segal

Nick Cave & Warren Ellis

★★★

Loin Des Hommes OST

GOLIATH. CD/DL/LP

Existential rumblings score big screen adaptation of Camus' The Guest.

Continuing a run of film scores they've composed together (The Road, Lawless and West Of Memphis), Nick Cave and long time Bad Seed Warren Ellis's latest collaboration finds them conjuring the arid Algerian mountain ranges for a cinematic adaptation of Albert Camus's The Guest. Mostly sparse and minimal, occasional bolts of drama tear through the parched soundscapes, and it definitely owes more to the deep saturnine blues of Dirty Three than the Bad Seeds' bawdy fiestas. The atmospheric Dust Storm is a highlight, as the ambient wash and anxious strings give way to Ellis's aching violin and complementary hums of black noise. Much of the rest – a shifting panorama of harmonics, violin scrape, occasional piano and further unhurried instrumentation – is background music of a high standard and, although shorn of imagery and narrative, has an existential heaviness Camus would appreciate.

Stevie Chick

Best Coast

★★★

California Nights

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

Los Angeles twosome forfeit indie edge for the centre-ground of pop's heartland.

Gently swimming closer to the mainstream since their *Crazy For You* debut in 2010, Best Coast's once-hazy '60s pop is given a makeover on this third album, at the hands of producer Wally Gagel, whose credits include Muse and New Order but also, tellingly, Miley Cyrus and Rihanna. As a result, *California Nights* comes over like a dreamier take on Hole's *Celebrity Skin* or a souped-up, digitally-produced Go-Go's. Feeling OK suggests a drive-time radio Beach House, When Will I Change has a touch of *Parallel Lines*-era Blondie about it, although the unrelenting strummy guitar assault gets a bit samey, suggesting the pair have become just the one trick. Only with moody Spectorish closer Wasted Time and the gorgeously atmospheric title track – depicting singer Bethany Cosentino high (in both senses) in the Hollywood Hills – do Best Coast reveal that there's still light and shade to them.

Tom Doyle

Mikal Cronin

★★★

MCIII

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Fragile-voiced, big-hearted SoCal singer-songwriter serves up plangent orch- and folk-pop song cycle.

Part of an incestuous California indie garage-glam scene led by Ty Segall, Mikal Cronin stepped out solo in 2011 with a pair of albums that found him coming on like a lo-fi Left Banke. Cronin's third effort is another ambitious leap into ornate record making. Though mostly a one-man affair, he covers a lot of ground across the album's 11 tracks, playing everything from French horn to Greek tzouras. Cronin also arranged full string accompaniment, adding a sonic richness to his tales of isolation and romantic woe. Divided into two parts – a pop-oriented first half and mini-concept LP about Cronin's youthful travails – each offers its own stand-outs, as on the majestic Big Star-influenced Feel Like ("I feel like I'm dying/I feel like I'm flying from myself again") and the pleading finale Circle.

Bob Mehr

Best Coast, losing light'n'shade in *California Nights*.

Expert system

Sixth album from enduring electro-poppers proves that it's not time to replace them just yet. By Victoria Segal.

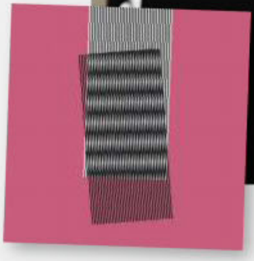
Hot Chip

★★★★

Why Make Sense?

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Sense and sensibility: Hot Chip know exactly what they're doing.



THERE'S NEVER been anything artificial about Hot Chip's intelligence. Even at their most apparently arch (the Putney quintet's 2004 debut *Coming On Strong* featured Playboy, a song about "blazin' Yo La Tengo" from a Peugeot, while 2012's Night And Day deadpanned "Do I look like a rapper?"), it's always been clear that they aren't content to skate along the ice-cool surface in ironic hats while there are depths to fathom. Even when on the dancefloor, they can't shift their intellectual anchor and cut completely loose – a vice when it comes to having the time of your life, maybe, but a virtue when making smart, loveable music. When Alexis Taylor sings "You make my heart feel like it's my brain," over the assertive clavinet come-on of Started Right, it's a reminder of just how tightly bound mind and body are in Hot Chip's universe.

Accordingly, *Why Make Sense?* is a record keen to define its place in the world. Opener Huarache Lights announces "Machines are great/But best when they come to life", as robotic beats slowly raise the heat under the song until it's suddenly – startlingly – at boiling point. A mechanised refrain of "replace us with the things that do the job better" shows Hot Chip wryly aware of the working band's built-in obsolescence, but it also contrasts with the warm-blooded sample from 1983's Let No Man Put Asunder by Philadelphia girl-group First Choice: "I've got something for your mind, body and soul/Every day of my life."

This is the holistic approach Hot Chip aim to emulate on *Why Make Sense?*, aware that emotional connection isn't the kind of thing easily automated or substituted. It's plain to see why they are drawn to the invulnerable dynamics of electronic music, but they can't quite slam down the visor on their sonic armour and hide their weak points. The steely techno-cladding of Cry For You conceals a soft-bodied synth centre and a beautifully nerdy lover's plea: "Let's put this to the test/Whatever happens next." They convey the exhaustion of living in a hostile world on Need You Now, matching the mood of Massive Attack's Unfinished Sympathy, and a resignation on the title track's slightly formless cosmic thrum.

More optimistic is the glassy R&B sparkle of Love Is The Future, featuring vocals from De La Soul's Posdnuos and arrangements from kindred spirit Green Gartside, where they seem to turn the process of being in a band into a grand love story: "We turn heads as we turn on a phrase."

If *Why Make Sense?* is a campaign for their continued existence, it works beautifully, the logical progression for a band who know exactly what they are doing.

Steve Gullick

Du Blonde

★★★

Welcome Back To Milk

MUTE. CD/DL/LP

Beth Jeans Houghton rages against the machine.

"What is it like to fuck your mistress with her hands tied?" asks Black Magic, a spaghetti western-infused glam-stomp with an anthemic chorus. Elsewhere, "Jekyll's in the kitchen sucking off Hyde." Beth Jeans Houghton's reinvention of herself as Du Blonde is a rebirth. Newborn, she is back on milk. Seeing the David Bowie Is exhibition compelled her to never want to be pinned down. Sick of misogyny, being demeaned and told what to do, she shelved her then-in-progress second album and abandoned a more measured music. *Welcome Back…* nods to California hardcore: the opener is titled Black Flag. Nick Cave's grind bubbles up: the producer is the Bad Seeds' Jim Sclavunos. It ends with a tender lament, both to her late grandfather and the nature of identity. *Welcome Back To Milk* is a powerful outpouring, but what lingers longest are the pauses for reflection.

Kieron Tyler

Bop English

★★★

Constant Bop

BLOOD AND BISCUITS. CD/DL/LP

Debut solo LP from White Denim's James Petralli.

White Denim's music is restless, teeming with different, often contrasting ideas. Due to its four year gestation and long list of guest musicians – who all put down their parts separately – *Constant Bop* is even more eclectic. Struck Matches sounds like driving music for a car chase with its cool vocal melody whipped along by the taut, high velocity drumming of White Denim drummer Josh Block. With its boogie guitars and deftly arranged brass, the brisk, funky Trying reminds of a hypothetical hybrid of Prince and The Allman Brothers Band. Petralli's strong melodic structures knit these elements together. From a mid-paced start, Have I Got It Wrong shifts up a gear into a swinging 6/8 rhythm with proggy pianos, clavinets and mesh of guitars, and while it feels sonically overloaded in places, his yearning vocals make the sense of doubt expressed in the song sound like an ecstatic state.

Mike Barnes

METZ

★★★

II

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Prosaically titled second album from noise-loving Canuck bruisers.

While not quite as sleazy or shirts-off sweaty as labelmates Pissed Jeans, Toronto three-piece METZ possess a sound rooted in much the same lineage. Harking back to the late-'80s/early-'90s glory days of the Touch & Go and Amphetamine Reptile labels, the group's post-hardcore squall displays a ferocity that belies the unassuming outward demeanour of band members Alex Edkins, Chris Slorach and Hayden Menzies. A rabid mêlée of pummelling drums, guttural bass and blow-torch guitar, the likes of Acetate, Landfill and Nervous System batter the ears with a convulsive fury that recalls The Jesus Lizard, Drive Like Jehu or Nirvana if they'd favoured Big Black over Black Sabbath. Elsewhere, The Birthday Party-esque clamour of Spit You Out further shows what METZ are capable of when they ease off the accelerator.

Andrew Carden

Eaves

★★★★

What Green Feels Like

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Aka Leeds-based singer-songwriter Joseph Lyons.

With its songs about alcoholism and murder, the title of Eaves' late 2014 EP As Old As The Grave spelt out an artistic sagacity beyond his 23 years. This intimate debut album follows suit, proving that for all the supposed keepers of the flame lit by Buckleys Tim and Jeff, there is at least one who can hold a candle. Initially all hypnotic fingerpicking and carefully chosen imagery, Pylons quickly powers-up into a fine, full-band arrangement, while upright piano ballad Timber assimilates the choicest tics of all your favourite joanna-sat songwriters into something strikingly fresh and moving. Like Nick Mulvey circa Fever To The Form, Eaves engrosses via the quiet intensity and somewhat opaque quality of his songwriting, but the heartsore, subtly epic Alone In My Mind, with its minor to major resolution, shows he is more in thrall to traditionalism.

James McNair

Still searching, still discovering: Paul Weller, his journey never ends.

Voyage of discovery

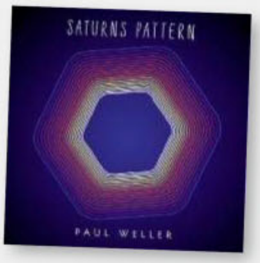
Astral and inner contemplation with pop's 21st century explorer. By Danny Eccleston.

Paul Weller

★★★★

Saturns Pattern

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP



PAUL WELLER's 21st century progression from becalmed dadrocker to effervescent pop alchemist has upended much received wisdom about Rock Elder trajectories, but even some of his staunchest supporters wondered if he'd overdone the HRT when, after the organic and tender *22 Dreams* and the fizzing, multivalenced *Wake Up The Nation*, 2012's *Sonik Kicks* delivered some incongruously theatrical, even camp, flourishes.

But while Weller is not immune to bombast, he can usually be relied upon to self-correct. And so it is with *Saturns Return* – a modestly sized, nine-track snapshot of the singer in a more appealingly inward phase.

Always an idol (it's why Weller is "Paul" – he was born John William), Paul McCartney returns as a welcome spirit guide, present in the spacey, distorto-voiced grind of White Sky (the album's sole credit for psych mix nutjobs The Amorphous Androgynous) and the wistful-jaunty piano that drives the quirky, radiant title track and the poignant, multipart Going My Way. Meanwhile, Macca echoes more generally in an atmosphere of what-the-hell musicality that's typified by the playful Pick It Up, which begins as a kind of Beta Band shuffle until Hammond surges, Spanish guitar flourishes and wubba-wubba noises submerge it in primordial psych soup.

Here, and in the more aggressive Long Time, a familiar Weller theme emerges: that of having it, losing it, and finding it again, whether that's the self-confidence required to create or the mooring of a seemingly solid relationship ("birds of a feather still fly away…"). Phoenix digs still deeper, in a soulful statement of the latter-day Weller's homespun pantheism, the titular symbol of renewal given wings by sun-drenched jazz-rock of tactile richness, laden with Tame Impala-esque shimmer. It's perhaps odd to think of Weller as a guru of something other than haircuts, or shoes, but this developing interest in the cosmic and ineffable is the measure of what some might dare to call his 'personal growth'.

Or has he just smoked a big spliff and chilled out? There's certainly a newly relaxed vibe abroad here, a sense that anything might be allowed to happen, and results tend towards the quietly strange and pleasingly enigmatic. They're qualities best summed up by the unfathomable In The Car, where Weller's narrator tools "round and round the M25… front or back seat, I don't mind" while its bedrock blues-rock choogle sounds like it's sporadically gate-crashed by Erik Satie. It's a kind of musical serendipity echoed in eight-minute closer These City Streets, a bittersweet, gently swinging thing spiced with another out-of-left-field intervention: the jazzy violin of Syd Arthur's Raven Bush.

As the song fades out, Weller and co are revealed blithely chanting, "You've still got a way to go". Still searching, still discovering, it's Paul Weller's perfect motto.

The Desired Effect
BRANDON FLOWERS

Brandon Flowers

★★★★

The Desired Effect

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

A Killer is on the loose again!

Quests for (further) world domination don't come much more transparent than this follow-up to Flowers' 2010 chart-topper *Flamingo*. "I wanted to fire him. *Four* times," the Nevada-born singer has said of *The Desired Effect*'s producer Ariel Rechtshaid (Haim, Charli XCX), but Rechtshaid's exacting standards have undoubtedly paid dividends. With its chintzy synths rebranded cool (witness Lonely Town, which dons Springsteen's blue collar) and guest list of '80s pop-stars (Neil Tennant, Bruce Hornsby and Jimmy Somerville, the latter via the Smalltown Boy-sampling I Can Change), this album is brazenly in hock to the shoulder pad decade. Its telegraphed choruses will not be denied, however, and the Lionel Richie-meets-Neneh Cherry Can't Deny My Love, glossy rock'n'roller Digging Up The Heart and punchy opener Dreams Come True all support Flowers' claim that *The Desired Effect* is awash with singles.

James McNair

Cathal Smyth

★★★★

A Comfortable Man

PHOENIX RISING. CD/DL/LP

Goodbye to the house of fun, now you've come of age.

First circulated last year in limited vinyl form, *A Comfortable Man* is Chas Smash from Madness doing the cathartic, post-divorce thing – in excelsis. It's a dark story: a break-up with his childhood sweetheart 10 years ago led to rehab, a move to Ibiza, much painful self-contemplation and, last year, a ritual purging by a shaman involving the powerful Amazon hallucinogenic ayahuasca. He may or may not still be in Madness. The musical document of his journey is appropriately desolate, but altogether rather moving. Essentially, it's Smyth playing Victorian parlour piano, accompanied by mournful strings and celestial backing vocals, unburdening in fragile, husky tones about rehab (You're Not Alone), lifting off to a better place (Goodbye Planet Earth) and, ouch, the kids (Are The Children Happy?). Painfully raw, delicate, and tailor-made for broken middle-aged nutty boys.

Pat Gilbert

Roísín Murphy

★★★★

Hairless Toys

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM. CD/DL/LP

Ex-Moloko singer and neo-disco royalty reclaims crown.

In the eight years since her last album, *Overpowered*, Roísín Murphy's most significant productions have been her two children. On this thrilling evidence, she has been storing up a larder-full of ideas too. Murphy and long-term musical partner Eddie Stevens put disco at the heart of an album that invokes the spirit of its finest proponents, particularly Grace Jones. Exploitation, Evil Eyes and House Of Glass are sprawling magna opera. The former is a slab of wonky, galloping alt-house, while the latter's sultry mood is built on soulful organ, staccato guitar and skittering percussion. Meanwhile, Evil Eyes is a sparkling 4/4 stomp, mixing Close Encounters with Chic. Elsewhere, Murphy – her adroit lyrics a starring presence throughout – dips into down-tempo, gospel pop and campfire country rock, but it's the brooding dance floor ordnance which marks *Hairless Toys* as a career highlight.

Stephen Worthy

Mac McCaughan

★★★★

Non-Believers

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Solo debut from North Carolina indie rock guru.

With six albums (plus soundtracks) under the Portastatic banner, Superchunk's Mac McCaughan already has an established vehicle for the urges that frenetic ampage can't satisfy. *Non-Believers*, however, is distinguished both by clarity of voice and a poignant authorial perspective. As vintage synths and spooked guitar lines salute early-'80s touchstones like New Order and The Cure, the mid-forties McCaughan reflects upon the rites of passage betwixt adolescence and adulthood, with the Springsteenian detail that's decorated recent Superchunk records. He's very much present on opener Your Hologram, where "There's an '82 Honda getting all its tapes stolen/Outside a party where the tension is real". Among many highlights, the best and brightest is the Guided By Voices-do-Status Quo elation of Box Batteries, an elegy for youth designed to live forever.

Keith Cameron

Bachman

★★★★

Heavy Blues

LINUS ENTERTAINMENT. CD/DL/LP

Randy Bachman rounds up some famous friends.

The BTO and Guess Who veteran returns heading a powerhouse blues-rock trio, aided on various tracks by Neil Young, Joe Bonamassa, Peter Frampton, Robert Randolph, Scott Holiday, Luke Doucet and even the late Jeff Healey, whose contribution was culled from a live session he did with Bachman some years ago. Much of the material is standard heavy fare, based around familiar riffs and embellished with solos that blaze momentarily. The Healey feature, Confessin' To The Devil, which bounds along on the back of a Bo Diddley beat, and the mildly gospel-tinged Oh My Lord, featuring Randolph, are among the more distinctive offerings to take a bow, though it's We Need To Talk, a simply-set ballad relegated to the final spot on the record, that confirms how good a writer Bachman can be.

Fred Dellar

Patrick Watson

★★★★

Love Songs For Robots

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

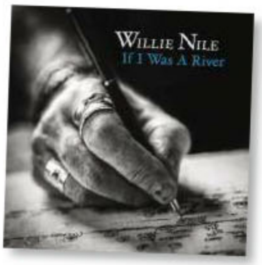
Canadian maven's fifth album – programmed for success.

This Québécois musical scientist may insist he's not a robot, which is what this album's all about; but often, with his previously chilly, off-kilter experimentation, it's seemed he might be. The title track opener weaves Air-like synths into a wooing, barely-there refrain; on Good Morning Mr Wolf, however, Watson's vocal, often compared to Jeff Buckley's falsetto, is as warm as Devendra Banhart's, draped imploringly against slide guitar and cabaret rock. Bollywood is hushed, Watson's vocal close to the mike, as intimate as Marvin Gaye's. And then, on In Circles, with its plangent, Yan Tiersen-style piano, something wonderful happens – a feeling of limitlessness opening up. Turn Into The Noise offers jazz/soul scatting over what is almost an Echoplex, and by now you're sold. The last track is gorgeously hypnotic, offered with a hokey graininess.

Glyn Brown

Android job: Patrick Watson loves his robots.

Clyde Henry Productions



Willie Nile

★★★

If I Was A River

BLUE ROSE. CD/DL

Leathern veteran so authentic Steve Van Zandt "can't believe he's not from New Jersey".

Unusually, the sleeve photos alone tell the story of this singer-and-piano album: Nile's hands – all rings and wrinkles and square-cut, bruised nails – hold a pen and write out the chords, underscore a word, or quietly poise above the keys' perfect orderliness. Since his 1980 debut, he has lurched through illness and music business problems to emerge, 2006 onwards, with five studio and three live albums, fulfilling himself at last. This digression from big bar-band rock'n'roll feels right because his fervent performances – viz the title song and I Can't Go Crazy (Anymore) – embody devotion to love and decency, with regard to a woman, the God he's not sure about, and people generally… except for Lullaby Loon's vinegared corrective which honky-tonks through a very fine denunciation of music in all its manifestations, from "Cozy ballads make me puke" to "The classics are for the criminally insane".

Phil Sutcliffe

Howlin Rain

★★★★

Mansion Songs

EASY SOUND. CD/DL/LP

First in a trilogy of post-major label recordings.

The monochrome sleeve photo shows Ethan Miller on a skyscraper staircase – getting away maybe, or just going down. Way down, judging by the first Howlin Rain studio album since being dropped by American Recordings. Curious but compelling, its eight songs – written, says Miller, at "rock bottom" – are crowded with killers, traitors, demons, violent animals, death, greed and graves. Miller also lost all bar one of his bandmates, and at times this feels like a solo album – Restless and Coliseum, raw voice and acoustic guitar; Lucy Fairchild, with Miller alone on piano then harpsichord, before a multi-tracked one-man choir adds a wave of glory. Elsewhere, a band provides those moments (Meet Me In The Wheat; oddly U2-ish The New Age; spoken-word closer Ceiling Fan) but overall the feel is sparse and desolate. Can't wait to hear part two.

Sylvie Simmons

Ian Siegal

★★★★

One Night In Amsterdam

NUGENE. CD/DL/LP

English troubadour makes riotous music with Dutch rockabilly guitarist.

IAN SIEGAL
ONE NIGHT IN AMSTERDAM

Finally, Siegal puts on record what many of his admirers have heard on stage, his collaboration with guitarist Dusty Ciggaar, and in the opening I Am The Train the young Dutchman electrifies this club recording with his spitting-wildcat guitar licks. Siegal mixes back catalogue favourites – Train, Brandy Balloon, Kingdom Come and his beloved Gallo Del Cielo – with pieces new to record like Writing On The Wall, Temporary and his latest joint composition with Keith Harrison, Queen Of The Junior Prom, a dark ode to Sylvia Plath ("Inside your head a hand grenade/You pulled the pin and watched them hit the ground…"). After the down-home geniality of *The Picnic Sessions* it was time for Siegal to make a kick-ass record, and in Ciggaar, bassist Danny Van't Hoff and drummer Raphael Schwiddessen he found ideal musicians to do it with.

Tony Russell

BLUES

BY TONY RUSSELL

Joe Bonamassa
Muddy Wolf
at Red Rocks

Joe Bonamassa

★★★★

Muddy Wolf At Red Rocks

PROVOGUE. CD/DL/DVD/BL

Two-disc tribute to two masters of Chicago blues.

MOST BLUES-rock musicians pay only lip-service to blues history, but Joe Bonamassa has always shown awareness of the repertoire, and here, in performance at the Red Rocks auditorium in Colorado, he presents eight songs each by Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, with a tailpiece of four from his own back catalogue. The Muddy selection is a little odd – Stuff You Gotta Watch? Double Trouble? – but Bonamassa handles it skilfully, and his slide playing on I Can't Be Satisfied and My Home Is On The Delta echoes the master's voice, piercing the air like a steel arrow. Bonamassa's vocals have gained weight over the years and he enacts the compressed dramas of Tiger In Your Tank, Spoonful and Killing Floor with justified swagger. Excellent backing by Mike Henderson (harmonica), Kirk Fletcher (guitar) and Reese Wynans (keyboards), among others.

ALSO RELEASED

Otis Taylor

★★★

Hey Joe Opus: Red Meat

INAKUSTIK CD/DL/LP

OTIS TAYLOR
HEY JOE OPUS

Taylor's trance-blues mode is expressed here in blends of repetitive guitar figures with violin or drifting trumpet, as in two readings of Hey Joe and three of the pastoral instrumental Sunday Morning, the first enclosing a passage that might almost be by Philip Glass. Apart from The Heart Is A Muscle, the songs are less imaginative than Taylor's multi-textured arrangements.

Lightnin' Slim

★★★★

I'm A Rolling Stone

JASMINE. CD

Slim's late-'50s Excello singles such as Mean Ole Lonesome Train, My Starter Won't Start and Rooster Blues, gathered on this 2-CD set, were Southern transcriptions of Chicago blues, Muddy Waters as he might have sounded if he'd stayed downhome. With their chugging harmonicas and found percussion, they are as hypnotising as when they captivated Southern record-buyers – and blues collectors – 50 years ago.

Paul Jones

★★★

Suddenly I Like It

CONTINENTAL BLUE HEAVEN. CD/DL

Refusing as ever to be typecast, the Blues Band frontman struts his enviably in-shape stuff on a setlist of soul, vintage R&B, gospel, blues and original compositions, including poised readings of Are You Lonely For Me Baby and Don't Go To Strangers. He's solidly supported by a quartet featuring guitarist Jake Andrews, with cameos by Bonamassa, Jools Holland and others.

Roy Brown

★★★★

Pay Day Jump – Later Sessions

ACE. CD/DL

Despite the slightly confusing title, this is in fact the young Roy Brown as heard on his 1949-50 DeLuxe recordings, with such exemplary demonstrations of his dramatic, almost operatic singing as Boogie At Midnight, the darkly threatening Butcher Pete, and the still mesmerising Hard Luck Blues. Reproduced in brilliant sound, with expert sleevenotes and many unfamiliar alternative takes – reissues really do not come much better than this. *TR*

Sing out sisters: Saundra Williams (right) and Starr Duncan-Lowe.

The Dap queens

Sharon Jones's back-up singers bring the house down with auspicious debut. By Lois Wilson.

Saun & Starr

★★★★

Look Closer

DAPTONE. CD/DL/LP

FIRST ISSUED in April 2014, Saun & Starr's debut single Hot Shot/Gonna Make Time became the Daptone label's best-selling 45 to date. It's not hard to see why. Over a dry funk rhythm built around an insistent guitar riff, Starr Duncan-Lowe, one half of the New York duo, points the metaphorical finger at her bad man and cries: "You're on the spot, hot shot!" Written by Daptone co-owner and house producer Gabe Roth with Dap-Kings saxist Cheme Gastelum, and recorded live to tape at Daptone's House Of Soul studio in Brooklyn with The Dap-Kings, it's tough, audacious, a little like Jean Knight's Mr Big Stuff and unashamedly retro. It's elevated above mere genre exercise, however, by the enthusiastic execution, and specifically Starr's sassy delivery and expansive vocal range – she really can go from a whisper to a scream. Meanwhile its flip, Gonna Make Time, penned by Dap-Kings drummer Homer Steinweiss, places the spotlight on Saun, born Saundra Williams. An intense ballad, Saun's vocal is rich and overflowing with emotion. Sensibly, both sides appear on their pair's thrilling debut album.

Saun & Starr first appeared on record together under the banner of the Dapettes, Sharon Jones's back-up vocal duo on her *Give The People What They Want* album. They'd first sung with Jones in the '90s as a part of her wedding band, The Good N Plenty Girls, performing soul classics up and down the East Coast – they'd answered the same ad separately, and when Jones couldn't decide between the pair, she hired both. When Jones eventually disbanded the trio to follow her solo dream, Starr went back to the church – where she and Saun had started – with sanctifiers Glory Gospel Singers and Sister Act; Saundra issued a series of strong solo singles and 1999's *Bless The Day*. Then, out of the blue in 2008, Jones called them up for a one-off show that led to a permanent gig then an opening slot on Jones's revue as Saun & Starr [see MOJO 250].

Saun & Starr
Look Closer

Only the driving funk of Your Face Before My Eyes bears the influence of Jones; in fact Saun & Starr cite the music of Rosetta Tharpe and Marie Knight as the blueprint for their female duo. The remainder of their album, recorded on the back of the single's success, owes much to the sweet sounding Honey Cone and Jean Terrell-led Supremes – the exception In The Night, a dramatic deep soul ballad, the kind championed by Dave Godin. The title track, Sunshine (You're Blowin' My Cool) and Another Love Like Mine then are dizzying sugar-rush pop as Starr and Saun swap lead and backgrounds and complement one another with ease. Once more, Daptone has come up trumps; this is solid gold soul.

GIANT SAND
heartbreak pass

Kyle Dean Reinford

Giant Sand

★★★★

Heartbreak Pass

NEW WEST. CD/DL/LP

Howe Gelb celebrates 30 years of Giant Sand.

Slimming down from the expanded band that recorded 2012's *Tucson* (as Giant Giant Sand, natch), Howe Gelb's questing collective mark 30 years of inimitable wanderings with a peripatetic set recorded all over the world, finding space for every style the legendarily multifaceted group have thus far explored. So the gorgeous, echo-soaked strum of Heaventually (Gelb observing that "Time itself is becoming elastic" – he should know) segues into the noise-laden psychedelic stomp of Texting Feist, the synth-scored Transponder (Grandaddy's Jason Lytle guests) abuts the (relatively) more trad dustbowl pluckings of Song So Wrong, while the profound yet understated Forever And Always (written with and featuring Gelb's 12-year-old daughter) rounds out a handful of hushed tunes suggestive of Gelb's piano-led solo albums. It's testimony to the current health of his muse that *Heartbreak Pass*, while containing only new songs, feels like a greatest hits and as such is a perfect entry point for Giant Sand neophytes.

Stevie Chick

Death

★★★

N.E.W.

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

If only all bands whose chief songwriter had died in 2000 could be this productive.

We're Gonna Make It – the heartfelt but undeniably clunky 1992-penned finale of last year's *Death III* – suggested that the teat of inspiration might finally be drying up on this most life-affirming of musical rebirths. But the fourth LP from surviving Detroit siblings Bobby and Dannis Hackney (containing not just completed versions of formative late-'70s fragments but, gulp, actual new material) announces itself in thrillingly vital fashion with the Thin-Lizzy-go-to-Detroit stomp of Relief and the Bad Brains-tinged stop-start self-examination of Look At Your Life. And even while eschewing the much-loved spacey dub demo interludes of earlier releases for a kind of metaphysical hard rock, all but one of these 10 tracks (the too literal-minded Resurrection is the exception that proves the rule) are worthy additions to a now capacious legacy.

Ben Thompson

Terakaft

★★★★

Alone

OUT HERE. CD/DL

Is the world ready for Tamashek disco?

TERAKAFT
ALONE

Suffering from Tuareg fatigue? You may not be alone, for this fifth album by a Tinariwen sideshoot (Terakaft's permanent members were among the founding family of the more famous band) takes more liberties with the desert blues than any recordings that have so far come out of the heart of the Sahara. The guitars still seek out a camel-walk groove, the vocal harmonies ooze the pain of a relentlessly pitiless life, yet there is a joy in the music you'd be hard-pushed to find before. Opener Anabayou kicks off with a beat reminiscent of bhangra; Tafouk Télé surges along on a motorik rhythm; Karambani sounds like nothing less than – in a very, very good way – Boney M at their most outrageously playful. Truth is, there's little Nile Rodgers could teach this lot about using a guitar to get people dancing.

David Hutcheon

Earl Sweatshirt

★★★★

I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside: An Album By Earl Sweatshirt

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Flying Lotus offers musical advice on one-time Odd Future man's second LP.

Despite its bedroom door-slamming title Earl Sweatshirt's new album feels more grown up than his 2013 debut *Doris*. Pointedly, *I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside: An Album By Earl Sweatshirt* has dispensed with its predecessor's plethora of guest spots and is largely self-produced. There's a bracing sense of playfulness to the beats too: they swerve unpredictably between dissonant piano, skeletal guitar and witch-house sonics. This makes for an interesting bedfellow with Earl's sad-sack persona (he raps about missing his grandma, stop-start relationships and taking beta blockers) and lethargic flow. Ultimately, highlights like the psychedelic AM // Radio and Faucet (driven by a Tame Impala-ish guitar figure and repeated line "I don't know where else to call home lately") temper the atmosphere of pot-drenched pensiveness. This portrait of the artist might be a gloomy, oppressive one but it's grimly fascinating nevertheless.

Priya Elan

I DON'T LIKE
I DON'T GO OUTSIDE
AN ALBUM BY EARL SWEATSHIRT

Bernard + Edith

★★★

Jem

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Manchester duo takes the Cocteau Twins to a Turkish market.

Not a comfy sit-com couple like Terry and June, Bernard and Edith are Manchester-based duo Greta Carroll and Egyptian Hip Hop's guitarist/bassist Nick Delap. Their middle names tag debut album *Jem*, a shimmering confection unashamedly wearing its influences. Third track Crocodile could pass for a Cocteau Twins outtake. After dropping this bombshell, Bernard + Edith settle back to marry the unsettling atmosphere of Twin Peaks with pocket-book reposts to the drama of Lana Del Rey. Things are twisted even more by Poppy, which brings a Turkish melodic lilt on board. The plangent instrument opening I Will Be sounds like a saz. The song would be at home in a souk. Although there is much that's familiar to *Jem*, Carroll and Delap bring it all together with a self-confidence that swiftly envelopes.

Kieron Tyler

Goran Kajfeš Subtropic Arkestra

★★★★

The Reason Why Vol. 2

HEADSPIN RECORDINGS. CD

Swedish jazz trumpeter with more globetrotting songs on this follow-up full-length.

Taking his Subtropic Arkestra to Turkey, Brazil, North America, Africa and early '70s Sweden, *The Reason Why Vol. 2* finds Goran Kajfeš going even deeper into an eclectic store of musical influences. Where its predecessor reworked tracks by Tame Impala, Soft Machine and Cluster, among others, this second instalment features a slightly more obscure assortment of international artists. Leading an ensemble that includes singer José González and Dungen guitarist Reine Fiske, Kajfeš smoothly grooves through acid-spiked Turkish jazz/pop (Dokuz Seki/Esmerim), head-bobbing Afrobeat (Francis Bebey's New Track) and moustachioed jazz-funk (Yet Again by US indie troupe Grizzly Bear). Also drawing Turkish psych-folk duo Mazhar Ve Fuat, Milton Nascimento's South American soulfulness and Swedish fusioneers Sevda into the sumptuous mix, the result is a beautifully-crafted magic carpet ride of a record.

Andrew Carden

Robin Guthrie And Mark Gardener

★★★

Universal Road

SOLEIL APRÈS MINUIT. CD/DL

A Cocteau Twin and former Ride frontman join forces.

Eschewing any fanciful band construct, this shoegaze marriage is more one-off fling, especially now that Ride have reformed. Since Cocteau Twins fractured in 1997, Guthrie has adopted various singers to offset his guitar orchestrations; Gardener is a rare male foil, even if the singer is tapping his softer, feminine register to match Guthrie's habitual warm-bath efflorescence. Stormy clouds gather over the escalating seven minutes of Dice, arguably Guthrie *or* Gardener's most epic high of the past two decades, but the album's opening words are "Keep it simple, keep it slow", which appears to be a manifesto of sorts (especially as the duo's only other release is a 2012 single). Largely, it's effortlessly gorgeous; Gardener's melodies float most gracefully on Cry For Survival and Blind – the latter a slight return of tension, but not compensation enough for those hoping the Cocteaus+Ride formula might result in something truly unbridled.

Martin Aston

Bernard + Edith: a shimmering confection.

The Lilac Time

★★★

No Sad Songs

TAPETE. CD/DL/LP

First new Lilac Time album since 2007.

Stephen Duffy's career has been remarkable – Duran Duran, co-writing with Robbie Williams and, with The Lilac Time, strikingly forecasting the last decade's folk-pop revival. Here he often sounds like 1970s Radio 2, a droller version of Peter Sarstedt, while Prussian Blue suggests Hugh Grant randomly reading captions from a Sunday-supplement fashion spread ("Whispering kisses/Recherché mistresses/In Rigby & Peller bras"). Duffy's devotional regard toward his own aesthetic rapture is sometimes cloying, but these are also beautifully mellifluous and impressively composed recordings. With its Caribbean pulse and damning invocation of big business, Babylon Revisited is a hipster inverse of Mike Read's infamous Ukip calypso. The title track and The Western Greyhound are sumptuous reveries, fitting homes for what has become a distinctive English pop voice.

Roy Wilkinson

Martin Gore

★★★

MG

MUTE. CD/DL

Principal Depeche Mode songwriter makes instrumental detour.

Following his 2012 proto-techno collaboration with fellow Depeche Mode founder Vince Clarke, *MG* is Gore alone in the vein of soundtrack impressionism with "an almost sci-fi like quality", he says. Drawing on Eno, Vangelis and Depeche modulations, at times the album's crepuscular electronic purity could dovetail with Blade Runner, or Peter Schickele's Silent Running; despite Gore surely having every digital machine at his disposal, *MG's* ambition and tone is engagingly, modestly lo-fi. It's also diverse, as if each track was searching for its own film. Elk is wistful, cut from the same gauzy cloth as Angelo Badalamenti's Twin Peaks; Brink is a whirring industrial collage, Southerly and Exalt resemble electronic versions of steam-punk and Europa Hymn, Creeper and Spiral all reflect their titles. The only drawback is that 16 tracks and 55 minutes feel too long for a set of minimalist adventures.

Martin Aston

SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE

Ben Salisbury & Geoff Barrow

★★★★

Ex _ Machina

UNIVERSAL/INVADA. CD/DL/LP

Portishead man and the David Attenborough Life Of… composer reunite for chimerical electronic sci-fi score.

Alex Garland's Ex_Machina was one of the surprise hits of early 2015, a spare sci-fi chamber piece that played with genre and gender assumptions to icy, claustrophobic effect. Key to the movie's sense of growing disquiet was Ben Salisbury and Geoff Barrow's under-the-surface score, an ever-present throb of electronic unease that served to render even the most prosaic of interactions creepy and tense. Their second work together, following their unused score for 2012's Dredd (later released as Drokk: Music Inspired By Mega-City One), Ex_Machina is often deceptively simple, minimal anodic drones disrupted by distant sour notes of ambient noise, naïve piano melodies engulfed in waves of metal racket, all serving to neatly underline that all is not well in this new technological Eden.

ALSO RELEASED

Disasterpeace

★★★★

It Follows

MILAN MUSIC. DL/LP

Just as David Robert Mitchell's 2014 art-house teen horror It Follows subverted post-Halloween stalk and slash, so the movie's score – a first from the San Francisco-based video games music composer Disasterpeace (aka Rich Vreeland) – deconstructs and dissembles John Carpenter synthesizer minimalism with shards of microtonal dissonance slicing through the dreamlike harmonic surfaces. This is a brilliant debut.

Matthew Watson And Daniel Thomas Freeman

★★★★

Catch Me Daddy

IMPORTANT. CD/DL

The grim hallucinatory mood of the Wolfe Brothers' debut is perfectly underscored by this intense collaborative score from Watson (aka Matthew Wolfe) and Rameses III's Daniel Thomas Freeman, where faint piano melodies and bright gamelan percussion are lost in the blasted moorland squalls of massed oscillator whine.

Jozef van Wissem

★★★

Partir To Live

SACRED BONES. DL/LP/DVD

The minimalist Dutch lutenist Jozef Van Wissem's score for Domingo García-Huidobro's 2012 non-narrative paranormal cine-hallucination surrounds his trademark baroque arpeggios with dank field recordings, black metal power chords, Leslie cabinet swirls and sci-fi analogue whee-wah, suggesting the nightmare experience of 17th century ghosts clawing up through foul black decades of loamy filth.

Debbie Wiseman

★★★★

Wolf Hall

BBC. CD/DL

Just as Mark Rylance's performance as Thomas Cromwell stripped everything down to a chilling minimum, so Debbie Wiseman's score is a pared synthesis of 16th century Tudor influences (William Byrd, John Dowland, Thomas Tallis), British folk horror cues and Carl Davis tropes. A uniquely strange and beautiful score slipped past the gatekeepers of quality BBC drama. *AM*

Goin' South: Rose Windows, sash cord wonders.

Lauren Rodriguez

Rose Windows

★★★

Rose Windows

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Seattle sextet head South for a set of blues-infused tunes.

Trading the American northwest for the Deep South, Rose Windows and producer Randall Dunn relocated to Louisiana to record the group's second long player. A more straightforward and focused affair than debut *The Sun Dogs*, the influence of this temporary home is readily apparent in the warm, blues-rock vibes that dominate the nine tracks here. Setting out their stall with the sun-baked drift of Bodhi Song and fuzz-toned stamp of Glory, Glory, they deftly blend Mississippi Delta tradition with the '60s San Francisco sound of Janis Joplin, Grace Slick and Jerry Garcia. Tagged a 'psychedelic' outfit, there's little obvious mind expansion in these long-haired ruminations on modern living, but Rose Windows still have the power to lift listeners far out of the everyday.

Andrew Carden

Bill Fay

★★★★

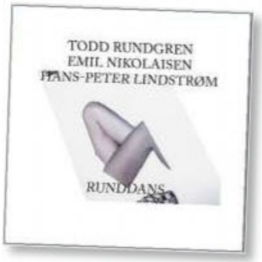
Who Is The Sender?

DEAD OCEANS. CD/DL/LP

Achingly poignant follow-up to 2012's *Life Is People*.

Bill Fay describes his music as "alternative gospel", a reasonable depiction of the music he's been making, sporadically, since the late '60s, his balladic muse surveying a benighted world through an implicitly Christian prism, seeking succour in the innocence of nature and lamenting human corruption. Built around Fay's simple, melancholy piano chords and fragile, involving vocals, subtly fleshed out by the same team that made its warmly received predecessor, *Who Is The Sender?* is effectively a set of moving, funeral-paced closing tracks addressing familiar themes – political disillusionment (War Machine), mortality (The Geese Are Flying Westward) and spiritual wonder (Underneath The Sun). Fay can sometimes trowel on the redemptive yearning, but the disarming hymnal beauty and old world sincerity in numbers like semi-spoken word World Of Life, or the numinous, string quartet-propelled title track, leap out and penetrate to the heart.

David Sheppard



Todd Rundgren/ Emil Nikolaisen/ Hans-Peter Lindstrøm

★★★

Runddans

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND. CD/DL

Rundgren and Norwegian musician/producer friends explore the outer limits.

Rundgren remixed Lindstrøm's Quiet Place To Live back in 2011 and this three-way collaboration, with Serena-Maneesh's Emil Nikolaisen, takes his furthest-out '70s material as its inspirational launchpad. Liquid Joy From The Womb Of Infinity is a sort of cosmic techno full of spumming synths with Rundgren's guitar arcing over the horizon, which is then all fractalised and generally mashed up 21st century-style. There are some songs, of sorts, with Rundgren's voice bouncing around a multi-dimensional hall of mirrors on Put Your Arms Around Me. On the sonic collage Ravende Gal (Full Circle) Todd is heard talking with his collaborators over the phone about ways to draw the audience into this music and not leave them scratching their heads, before their words are electronically disintegrated. One wonders what the wildly uneven, sporadically awesome *Runddans* would've sounded like if they'd not taken that precaution.

Mike Barnes

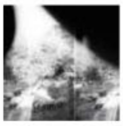
Godspeed You! Black Emperor

★★★★

Asunder, Sweet And Other Distress

CONSTELLATION. CD/DL/LP

Typically intense fifth album from the cataclysmic Montreal instrumentalists.



In 2012 *Alleluja! Don't Bend! Ascend!* documented GYBE's first studio activity for a decade, so news of its relatively prompt successor will be good news to fans of the Québécois collective's fusion of primal post rock and soaring, dystopian chamber music. Forty minutes of wordless shape-shifting spread across four sprawling tracks might, in less ascetic hands, suggest prog-like excess, but that's not the case here. Oscillating between monumental, vaguely Eastern-tinted unison guitar and strings blow-outs (Peasantry, Or Light! Inside Of Light!) and contrasting microtonal drones (Lambs' Breath), this is music of compelling intensity, whatever its volume or attack, mining the same monolithic seam that Glenn Branca or Sunn O))) draw from – indomitable, over-amped guitars distilling pure noise into a spectrum of resonant textures. There is thrilling melody here, too – the closing, 14-minute-long Piss Crowns Are Trebled leaping ever more vertiginously between icicle-sharp riff and spiralling crescendo.

David Sheppard

Death And Vanilla

★★★

To Where The Wild Things Are

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

Malmö dream-pop duo bask in analogue goo.

Named after Maurice Sendak's childhood fantasy story, this first UK-released album from Marleen Nilsson and Anders Hansson luxuriates in the twinkliest retro-futurism since Air's *Moon Safari*. Their bloopy synths, languorous beats and cotton wool-FX'd Julee Cruise ooze-singing, however, summon not the Frenchmen's all-welcoming smiley-rocket star-gazing shtick, but a penchant for time travel achieved via a portal which opens up only to those thoroughly whacked out on codeine. Necessary Distortions opens on a comparatively upbeat mantra, which, with its muffled vocal variance on the words "oscillation" and "isolation", suggests Hawkwind/ Spacemen 3 psychedelic uplift in a deep freeze. Later, the twosome explore a kitsch-pop so breathy and blurred as to have its probably-catchy toon abstracted to within a whisker of formlessness (The Hidden Reverse), while Moogskogen forges a kind of autumnal electro-baroque. Like Broadcast on ice, Death And Vanilla lack only a little warmth to make submersion in their pre-digital pool irresistible.

Andrew Perry

Sweet Billy Pilgrim

★★

Motorcade Amnesiacs

K SCOPE. CD/DL/LP

Fourth album from the Anglo American quartet inspired by JFK.

Reportedly, Sweet Billy Pilgrim's fourth album is partly influenced by leader Tim Elsenburg's love of Queens Of The Stone Age. And while some of the proggy guitar lines might recall Josh Homme, for the sheer interplay between unlikely musical tropes (hairy hard rock riffing, Meatloaf-style duets with co-vocalist Jana Carpenter, unexpected disco-lite breakdowns) and unyielding Spinal Tap bombast, it has more in common with the emo punk of the likes of My Chemical Romance and Panic! At The Disco, but without their sense of camp fun, or any apparent self-awareness. Instead *Motorcade Amnesiacs* feels stifling, overbearing, all too wrapped up in its own perceived cleverness for the listener to really warm to. It feels more like the original soundtrack to a West End jukebox musical.

Priya Elan

The Minus 5

★★★

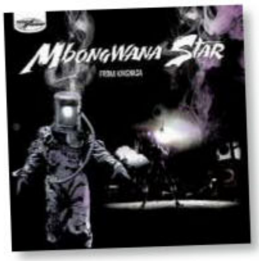
Dungeon Golds

YEP ROC. CD/DL/LP

Scott McCaughey's alt pop drop-in centre fields more psych-pop gems.

Led by The Young Fresh Fellows' Scott McCaughey and resembling a Traveling Wilburys for indie rockers, The Minus 5 are a cult-rock aficionado's dream, with a catalogue complex enough that it's arguable whether or not this is their thirteenth full-lengther to date. Culling 12 songs from *Scott The Hoople In The Dungeon Of Horror*, a 5-disc, vinyl-only box released last Record Store Day, *Dungeon Golds* is rich with wry psych-pop nuggetry of a kindred humour to Robyn Hitchcock. McCaughey plays every note of opener My Generation himself, matching multi-tracked ELO harmonies to a heavy-fuzz chug and a lyric declaring the "Children of the '60s… Soon to be in our sixties/Not ready to die/Not ready to fold." Elsewhere, guests abound: the deliciously Byrdsian In The Ground features Peter Buck and the late Ian McLagan, while Jeff Tweedy lends guitar to several tracks. But McCaughey is the real star throughout, his amiable charm and gift for melody seemingly inexhaustible.

Stevie Chick



Mbongwana Star

★★★★

From Kinshasa

WORLD CIRCUIT. CD/DL/LP

Back to the future, Congolese style.

The acrimonious break-up of Staff Benda Bilili briefly led to two bands of that name, but the smart money was always on songwriter Coco Ngambali putting daylight between the two. Inspired by Tony Allen's *Dark Voices*, which was produced by the Paris-based DJ Doctor L (Liam Farrell), this has more daylight than a summer solstice. Twiddling the knobs, Farrell here draws a line between New York circa 1980, when something new had arrived musically but nobody knew quite what and tomorrow was up for grabs, and early 1970s Africa, when the future still looked bright. Kala is where the album explodes into life, cowbell rhythm giving way to relentless electronic drive; Malukayi ups the intensity with backing from Konono No. 1; Shégué pays tribute to their roots as street kids; and Suzanna is headbanging techno with rumba guitar. The jungle is still rumbling.

David Hutcheon

WHITESNAKE
THE PURPLE ALBUM

Whitesnake

★★

The Purple Album

FRONTIERS MUSIC SRL. CD/DL/LP

"Snaked-up versions of those beloved Purple classics."

It was after Deep Purple's keyboardist Jon Lord died from pancreatic cancer in 2012, David Coverdale has said, that he and Ritchie Blackmore finally buried the tomahawk and began discussing a Purple reunion. The famously quarrelsome pair couldn't agree on a plot, though, hence Coverdale and staunch veteran drummer Tommy Aldridge convened in Reno, Nevada to make this turbo-charged retread of DP Mark III and IV material with younger, hungrier guns such as 'chops a gogo' guitarists Reb Beach and Joel Hoekstra. Though the scorching riff of Burn still thrills, the 'Snaking-up' of Might Just Take Your Life proves less calamitous than feared, and we can perhaps forgive David a whole slew of lyrics that seem indebted to the old Tom Jones song Daughter Of Darkness (he penned them in his early twenties), much of *The Purple Album* feels superfluous.

James McNair

THE FALL
SUB-LINGUAL TABLET

The Fall

★★★★

Sub-Lingual Tablet

CHERRY RED. CD/DL/LP

The Mark E. Smith saga continues, chapter 31.

"Pierce Brosnan, how dare you prescribe me bed-wet pills!" is a fine opening line for anybody's song, but especially so as shrieked by our Mark Edward Smith with hilarious, borderline-Kenneth Williams indignation, on Dedication Not Medication. It's central to his ongoing four-decade appeal that we're no closer to ever knowing what he's really on about, and – heroically, in this day and age – he's revealing nothing. Though his Fall's omnipresence/intransigence can sometimes feel like a curse, *Sub-Lingual Tablet* turns those tables: it's mighty good. Early on, Black Door's var-ispeed insanity makes a welcome break from the band's post-millennial, Pete Greenway-led Kraut/garage comfort zone for a thrilling anything-may-happen edge. Stout Man piledrives with fearsome Stoogean muscle while Auto Chip 2014-2016 brings a familiar MES rant about English musicians, to a 10-minute motorik that could only result in a lifetime driving ban. Swipes elsewhere at social media and iTunes/Bono/fan-funding make this the most on-message Fall album since *The Infotainment Scan*. Rejoice-ah!

Andrew Perry

Nightingales

★★★★

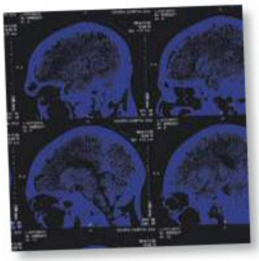
Mind Over Matter

LOUDER THAN WAR. CD/LP

Rock'n'roll workhorses maintain up their winning streak.

The post-punk survivor Robert Lloyd is back, with his strongest line-up yet and the Nightingales' ninth album. Since their '04 reformation, Lloyd has set out the new Nightingales' stall not as a nostalgia act, but as a remarkable force with a compulsion for forward motion like a shark or Mark E Smith. *Mind Over Matter*'s sleazy rockabilly nightmares and Captain Beefheart-channelling psychedelic detours are entirely in keeping with the group's '80s records, except the current members (especially drummer Fliss Kitson) play like a steel trap, fierce and tight. The two-track suite in the middle (formed by the hazy almost-instrumental For Different Folks and Kitson-sung Stroke Of Genius) is the most powerful moment, pounding along with wild abandon and bending guitars. "Crowd pleaser" Gales Doc and its sarcastic meta-monologue might be their career-defining moment in one long underdog story.

Ian Crichton



Opposition party

More good times with the Seattle DIY rock band, this time with added hangover. By Anna Wood.

Chastity Belt

★★★★

Time To Go Home

HARDLY ART. CD/DL/LP

"THE MOST fun things to say into a microphone are 'vagina' and 'pussy'," said Chastity Belt's singer-guitarist Julia Shapiro a couple of years ago. "And 'fuck'." This was just before the release of the band's debut, *No Regerts* (sic), highlights of which include Giant Vagina ("Most dudes don't sing along to Giant Vagina," guitarist Lydia Lund has noted) and Pussy Weed Beer. There isn't quite as much gleeful taboo-baiting on this second set, as they dig further and harder into the absurdity of being a young woman in America, and still make it catchy and fun as well as angry and melancholy.

On opening track Drone, with the bass throbbing like a hangover headache and the guitar ringing high like a siren, Shapiro repeatedly sings, "He was just another man trying to teach me something." What a line – is she talking about mansplaining or abuse? And she sounds so tired, and still it's funny. The song tumbles slowly forward, straight into the swirling melody of Trapped – three minutes of cheerfully bleak teen-angst: "It's all in front of me/Living, breathing, dreaming, dying."

Chastity Belt met at college in Walla Walla, then moved to Seattle, signed to Hardly Art (the Sub Pop spin-off which also has Hunx & His Punx and Colleen Green) and mixed this album with current Wire guitarist Matthew Simms. The four of them (Shapiro and Lund, plus Annie Truscott on bass and Gretchen Grimm on drums) are clearly a gang as well as a band – there is an invisible line of serious-not-serious that they are marching down together.

On Joke, Shapiro sings, "Nothing's serious/Everything's a joke," in a way that suggests that the opposite is also true. That track, with its cavernous, reverb-heavy dreaminess, is a blissful collapse into disappointment. It has the same chest-tightening melancholy mixed with swirling joyful abandon as The Cure's Just Like Heaven. Cool Slut won't commit to a conclusion either – louche and sauntering, then defensive and sad, then the pace and mood lift as the chorus celebrates, "Ladies, it's OK to beeee/It's OK to be sluttyyyy." Across the album, the guitars lurch and skip, the voice soars and dips, which makes you feel giddy and drunk and perfectly matches the daft-then-melancholy lyrics.

This is an album of two sides in a more literal sense, too. On The Floor, aka track five, closes the first side with sleepy consolations and a suggestion of more to come; the long, stumbling outro ends with one foot in mid-air, a party zombie ready to be resuscitated by The Thing, aka track six, the short, fast, kitschy horror-punk storm that opens the second half with gusto.

The closing title track is close to transcendent, like a particularly good Brian Jonestown Massacre song but with lovelier melodies and livelier drugs – a heady comedown with sweet surges of the-party-isn't-over energy, a band making music from joy and disappointment.

Rock 'em, sock 'em: Chastity Belt (from left) Gretchen Grimm, Lydia Lund, Annie Truscott and Julia Shapiro.

SHAMIR
RATCHET

Shamir

★★★★

Ratchet

XL. CD/DL/LP

New dance-pop ingénue's dictum: "Genre is a tool, not a boundary".

Vegas-born Shamir Bailey, just 20, made the BBC Sound Of 2015 shortlist on the basis of one EP, Northtown. The Beeb's faith is fully justified by this dazzling modern dance album, fearlessly smart and charismatic in a way that Calvin Harris/Diplo's brigade has forgotten in the stampede for ever-more mega-productions. Take first single On The Regular: stripped, bouncy disco-funk, nursery rhyme-catchy, playful manifesto ("While everyone is minus, you could call me multiply") delivered in gender-free rap freestyle, with an unexpected ballady breakdown. The rest of *Ratchet* follows suit, predominantly a party, ringed by zinging synths, drawing equally on Prince, house and DIY indie. Vegas is pallid funk lament ("If this is the city of sin, are we already living in hell?") while Darker's riveting Marvin-meets-Whitney ballad reveals Shamir can really sing.

Martin Aston

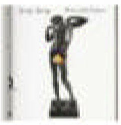
Django Django

★★★★

Born Under Saturn

BECAUSE. CD/DL/LP

Second album of warped pop delayed due to lasting appeal of Mercury-nominated debut.



Taken aback by the success of their eponymous 2012 album, Django Django found themselves touring in support of that home-recorded dazzler for far longer than anticipated. *Born Under Saturn*, recorded over 18 months, doesn't mess with its predecessor's winning formula, but instead enhances it, adding more synths, some of the rave-flavoured variety, and housey pianos which find them entering the jacking zone in Pause Repeat. Still, it's testament to the strength of the musical character of their choral harmonies that at no point could the listener mistake this as being anything other than the work of the Edinburgh-formed, London-transplanted foursome. Loosely themed lyrically around spirited rural adventures, with a touch of pastoral mysticism to Vibrations and First Light (sample line: "Discover beaches buried deeper underneath the cement"), there's joyous invention at work here, along with nagging hooks which bury themselves deeper with every play.

Tom Doyle

Tom McRae & The Standing Band

★★★★

Did I Sleep And Miss The Border

BUZZARD TREE/SONY MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Back with his seventh studio outpouring.

Despite the stellar write-ups, this Chelmsford-born son of two Church of England vicars seemed to have cornered the market in woe, a kind of whining Phil Collins. This time, we're promised fire, even if with brimstone – and my God (sorry!), does McRae deliver. We're in the sepia world of the gold rush, a Cormac McCarthy land of blood and loss. The High Life sets the scene: creaky harmonium, violins and McRae's vocal shockingly changed – the raddled, grainy howl of an embittered man. The Dogs Never Sleep opens with a sleazy Duane Eddy guitar line, reaching a post-apocalyptic hell of deafening riffs and a repeating roar of "I am lost!" Christmas Eve, 1943 brings romance; Spanish guitar under a starry sky, a gruff love song wrapped around a suicide note. For all the horror here, there are moments of galvanic hope. A dark triumph.

Glyn Brown

Kendrick Lamar

★★★★

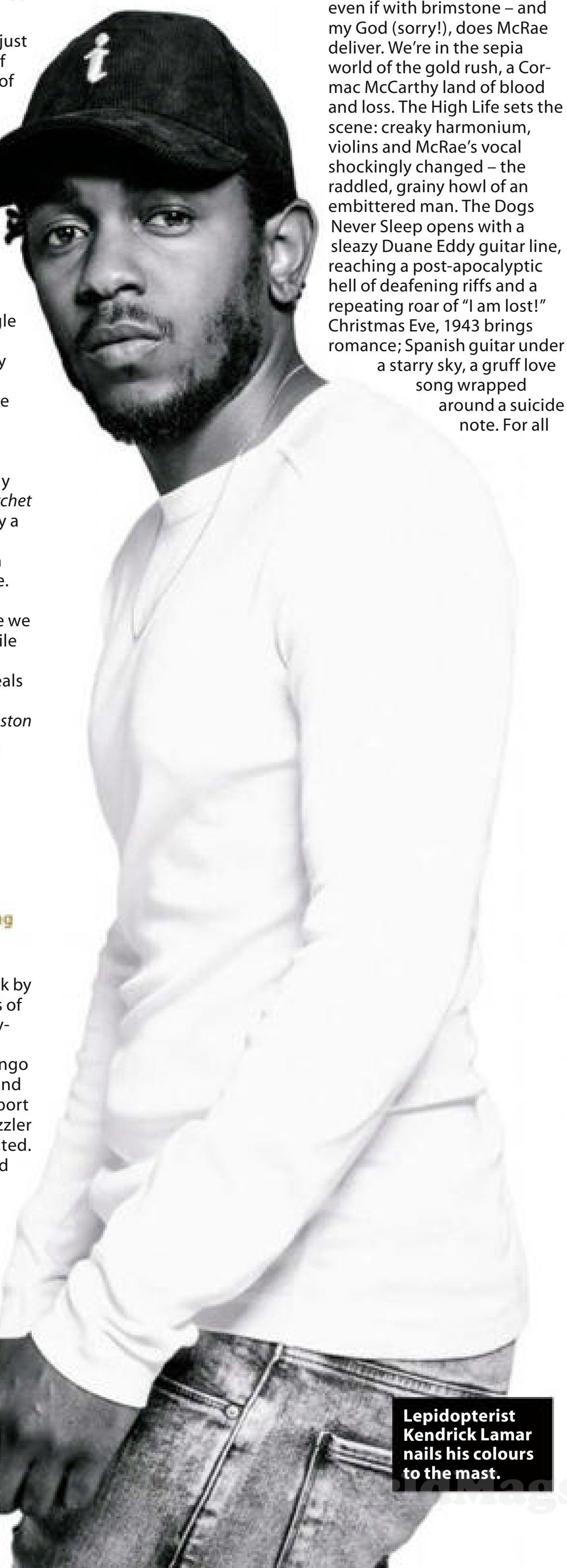
To Pimp A Butterfly

INTERSCOPE. CD/DL/LP

Compton rapper channels searing revolutionary ire via free jazz and '70s funk.

Kendrick Lamar's major label debut instantly placed him in a rarefied position. The Compton boy wonder's *good kid, m.A.A.d city* was a jittery, head-turning epic that took the brainy observational skills of *Illmatic*-era Nas and applied it to the hothouse of West Coast gangsta rap. Its hotly anticipated sequel attempts to tackle the recent police murders of young black American males head-on over urgent, free-wheeling, manically off-map productions that oscillate wildly between loose, free-form jazz, Parliament-indebted funk and languid soul. Whether going all-out cosmic on Flying Lotus-produced opener Wesley's Theory, spreading positivity on Pharrell's horn-heavy, head-nodding Alright or gruffly nailing his colours to the mast on the dramatic The Blacker The Berry, Lamar's dazzling lyrical virtuosity and risk-taking élan is rarely less than enthralling.

Andy Cowan



Lepidopterist Kendrick Lamar nails his colours to the mast.

Christian San Jose

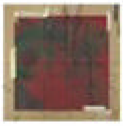
Poison Idea

★★★

Confuse & Conquer

SOUTHERN LORD. CD/DL/LP

First album in nine years finds Portland's oldest hardcore crew still the undisputed kings of punk.



With long-serving member Tom 'Pig Champion' Roberts sadly passing away shortly before the release of 2006's *Latest Will And Testament*, it's taken Poison Idea some while to truly find their feet again. Thankfully this protracted lay-off seems to have only added more bile to the group's trademark thrash'n'burn fury. Joined once again by guitarist Eric 'The Vegetable' Olson, and with newcomers Brandon Bentley and Nathan 'Skinny' Richardson further bolstering the ranks, *Confuse & Conquer* is a no-holds barrage of punk rock rage. Occasionally easing off the accelerator for a little mid-tempo swagger and Mark Lanegan-style strum, the rest of this stakes out a pugnacious middle ground between Black Flag and Motörhead – the kind of balls-out blitz that these guys made their own many moons ago.

Andrew Carden

Faith No More

★★★★

Sol Invictus

RECLAMATION/IPECAC. CD/DL/LP

It's Latin for 'Unconquered Sun', innit?

Long missed for their energy, mordant humour and sheer chutzpah (remember those choice covers of John Barry's Midnight Cowboy and the Commodores' Easy?), Faith No More return with their first LP since 1997's boastful-but-pukka *Album Of The Year*. *Sol Invictus* scratches a creative itch kick-started by the band's Second Coming tour, and reasserts that they will not be second-guessed or pigeonholed. Highlights including the portentous, baroque piano-led title track, unsettling metal ace Separation Anxiety, and the quite brilliant Sunny Side Up, a pop song which mentions leprechauns and Fred Astaire, and sees Mike Patton's formidable pipes segue between warm baritone croon and spleen-rupturing roar. Though professed influences this time out include Siouxsie & The Banshees and The Cramps, white-knuckle ride Superhero ("Put the S on your chest!/You're feelin' like a god!") is classic Faith No More.

James McNair

The Tallest Man On Earth

★★★

Dark Bird Is Home

DEAD OCEANS. CD/DL/LP

Sweden's earnest folk singer grows slightly bigger on fourth album.

Contentment never suited Kristian Matsson. The singer-songwriter's uproarious voice naturally lends itself to expressions of sorrow and pain, and going by his recent comments on the influence divorce albums have had on his writing, this is his *Rumours*. For a post-heartbreak soul-searching record, *Dark Bird Is Home* is Matsson's most purely enjoyable release in several years. Though he ditched channelling Dylan and banging on the guitar strings as if pounding dents out of sheet metal some time ago, this is his first tentative experimentation with some big band backing. Before the first two tracks are through, choirs, keyboards and drums make well-judged accompaniments to his stark style, and halfway-point highlight Timothy with its charming sing-along choruses is the finest distillation of this renewed focus. Take it from Kristian, the restorative power of art from pain holds true.

Ian Crichton

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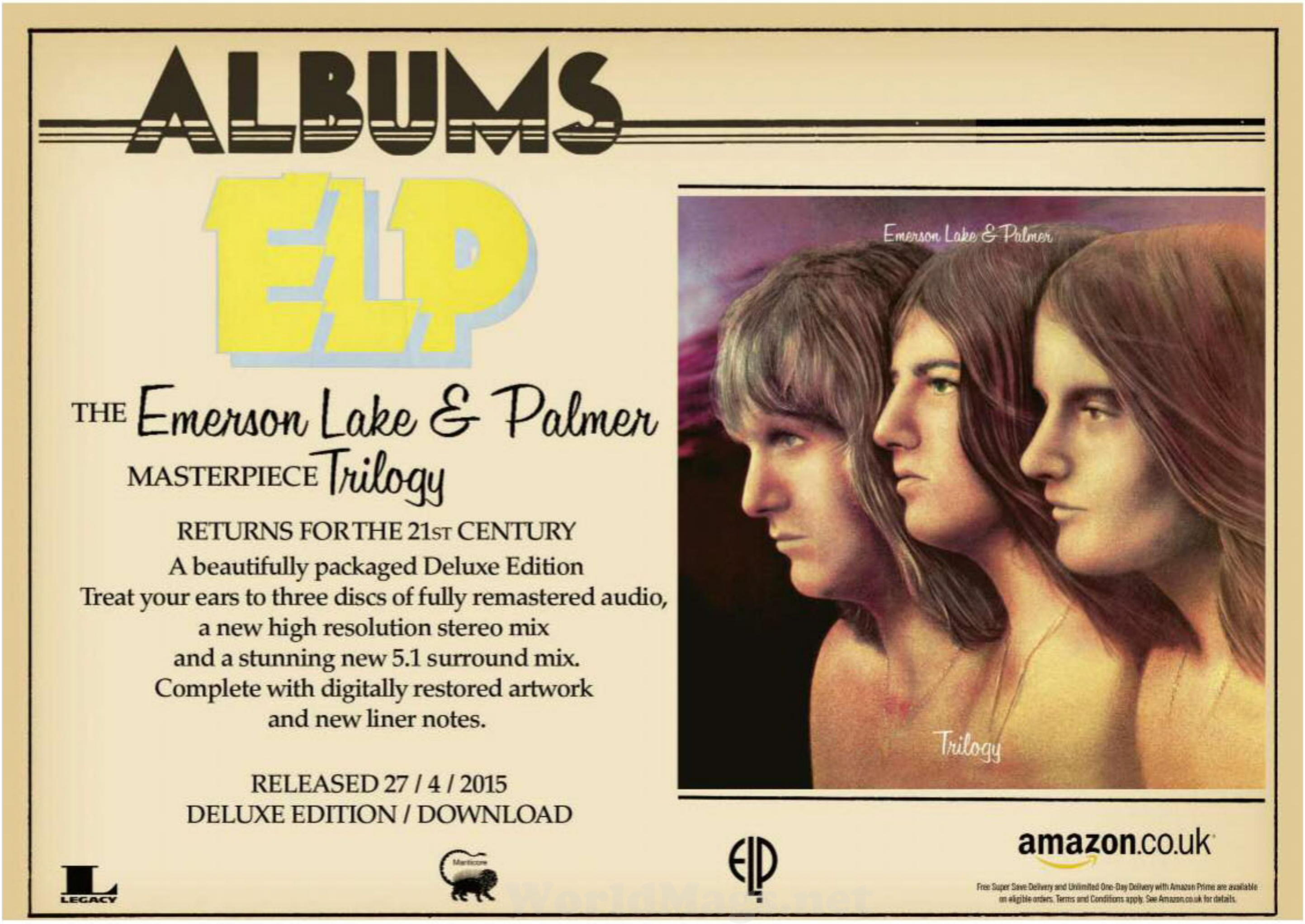

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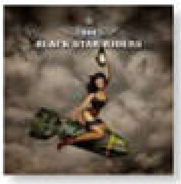
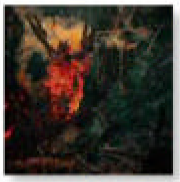


Black Star Riders
★★★

The Killer Instinct

NUCLEAR BLAST. CD/DL/LP

The reconstituted Thin Lizzy return with a second offering that comfortably continues their upward trajectory. Nick Raskulinecz's crisp production amplifies the album's collection of solid and at times heroic tunes. *PA*



Cranium Pie
★★★★

Mechanisms Part Two

FRUITS DE MER. DL/LP

English proggers "based in the 11th dimension" deliver a third album full of warm kosmische grooves and Anglican charm. Four tracks on a limited double LP set reward listening in one sitting by expanding minds. *PA*

Digitonal
★★★★

Beautiful Broken

JUST MUSIC. CD/DL

Musician-cum-electronic producer Andrew Dobson blends the still-life ambience of modern classical with the animated beats of early-'90s 'intelligent' techno. Autumn Round's glassy bell-tones and violins are a highlight. *JB*

Nils Frahm
★★★★

Solo

PIANODAY.ORG . CD/DL/LP

On the 88th day of 2015 the Berlin-based composer declared March 29 as Piano Day. For this inaugural date, Frahm released a free download of intimate close-miked unaccompanied 88-key explorations. *AM*

Jacco Gardner
★★★★

Hypnophobia

FULL TIME HOBBY. CD/DL/LP

With swirling grooves and sugar-coated dystopias the Dutch baroque popster has moved from his initial Day-Glo dreams towards a series of darker visions for his second album. An engaging, yet still hip-swinging trip. *PS*

Joanna Gruesome
★★★

Peanut Butter

FORTUNA POP! CD/DL/LP

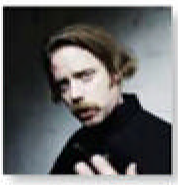
The joke name may be wearing thin, but the Cardiff group's ability to marry violent shrieking with melodious pop remains vivacious. Produced by Hookworms' MJ, their second album is a bittersweet indie-punk chaser. *PS*

Sophie Hunger
★★★★

Supermoon

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Whether on darkly cerebral atmospheric rock, singing – with surprisingly soulfulness – in German, or name-checking Courtney Barnett on surreal rave-up Superman Woman, Swiss Hunger's fourth is a diverse, intelligent work. *JB*



Jim Johnston
★★★

After All The Wishing…

RATTLEWATCH. CD/DL

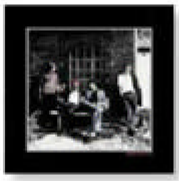
Formerly of Bristol's Monk & Canatella, Johnston's second solo LP releases the musical handbrake. Chaotic glee, sinister whispers and genre-popping rock'n'roll swirl to head-spinning effect. *PS*

Other Lives
★★

Rituals

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM. CD/DL/LP

The Oklahomans' ethereal prairie rock rang headily on 2011's *Tamer Animals*; this successor has some Morricone moments, but is comparatively wan and blandly *moderne*, as if relocation to Portland ripped out their roots, and soul. *DE*

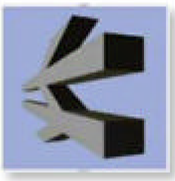


Palma Violets
★★★★

Danger In The Club

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

May Day riots meet Maypoles, as the Londoners tease out the inherent eccentricities from their rabble-rousing blueprint on a strung-out, yet devilishly assured second album. Pulsing with youthful rebellion, PV sound wildly bacchanalian. *PS*

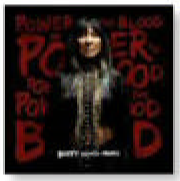


The Pre-New
★★★★

The Male Eunuch

3LOOP. CD/DL/LP

Ex-Earl Brutus refuseniks' second LP: super-barbed, electro-pub rock, a song called Middle Class Heavy Metal On Anti Depressants and an MRI scanner playing over a recording of Jerusalem. Is this what we've come to? (Yes). *IH*



Buffy Sainte-Marie
★★★

Power In The Blood

TRUE NORTH. CD/DL

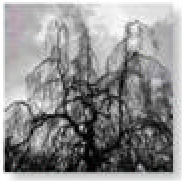
The Cree folkie in fine bellicose form at 74: The Uranium War details continued abuse of Native Americans; the title track stirringly covers Alabama 3; plus a revival of her defiant 1964 hit It's My Way. *PG*

Shriekback
★★★★

Without Real String Or Fish

SHRIEKBACK. CD/DL

Three-quarters of the classic Shrieks return with humorous, savage reflections on life. Recalling such historic triumphs as *Oil & Gold*, adepts will break out the psychedelic moonshine. *IH*



Colin Stetson & Sarah Neufeld
★★★★

Never Were The Way She Was

CONSTELLATION. CD/DL/LP

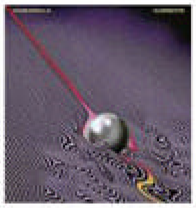
Multi-reedist Stetson and violinist Neufeld evoke Steve Reich and Christian Wolff with metal grind and klezmer chant on a dense dream dialogue. *AM*

NOWSTREAMING

Tinashe

Amethyst

Apparently this follow-up to last year's *Aquarius* was "recorded in Tinashe's bedroom over her Christmas vacation". A far-fetched image, but it creates the perfect setting for this sensational mixtape: intimate and introspective. Production may be in several different hands (including Ryan Hemsworth) but it's rivetingly consistent with mechanoid synths and gloaming beats. It's an aesthetic that will be familiar to fans of Drake and *Beyoncé*, but with her delicate vocal style and love of minimal sounds, Tinashe sounds like a natural heir to Aaliyah. Indeed, there's something of Timbaland and Missy Elliott's skin-and-bones production in Wrong with its Django Reinhardt-style guitar and car alarm keyboards. *PE*



Tame Impala

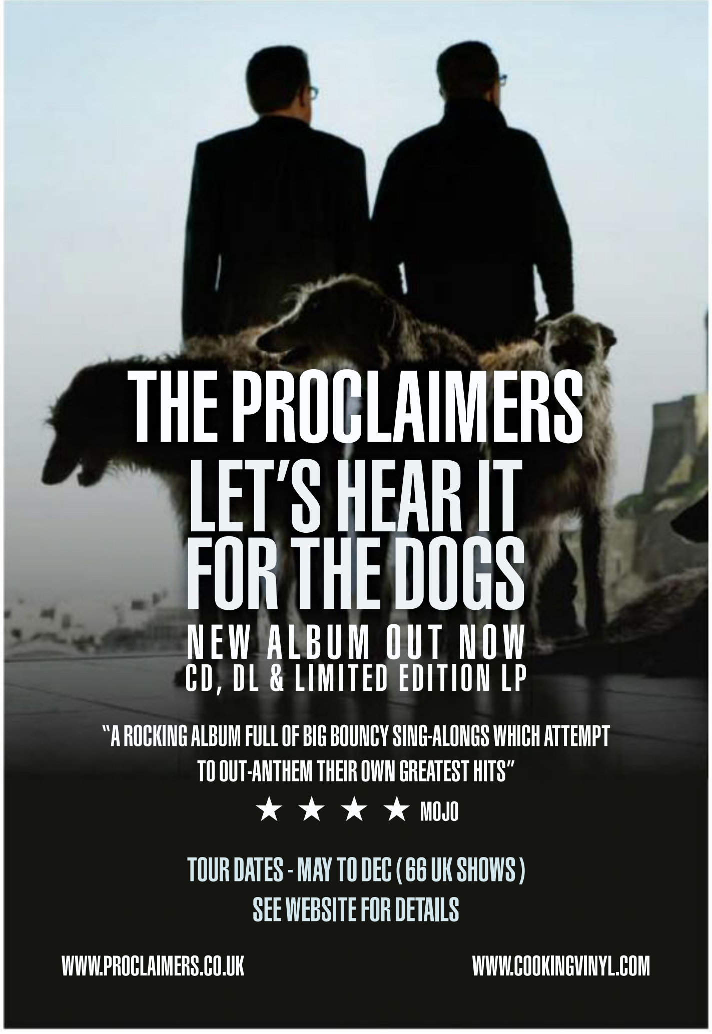
Let It Happen

Frontman Kevin Parker's experiments in eclecticism with Mark Ronson have rubbed off handsomely, if this limber, seven- minute slice of psych-disco ecstasy is anything to go by. (YouTube)

Ala.ni

Cherry Blossom

Dovetailing Ella Fitzgerald, Corinne Bailey Rae and Doris Day, this former backing singer for Damon Albarn and Mary J Blige has created a song steeped in wartime nostalgia. (YouTube)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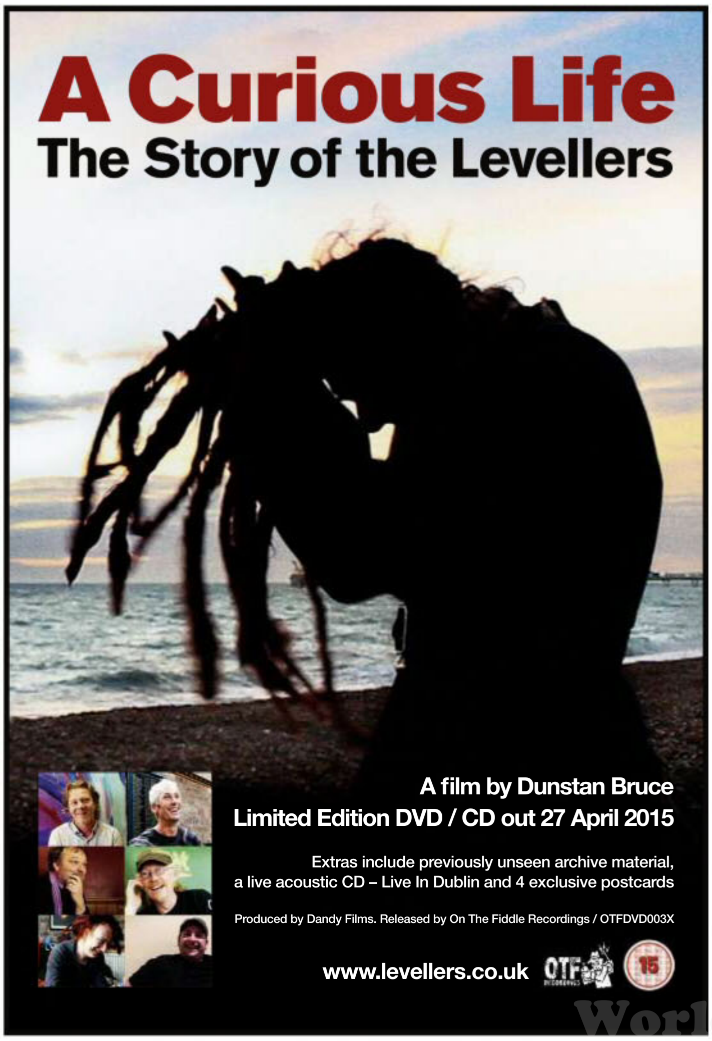
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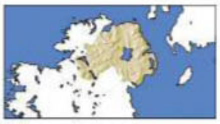

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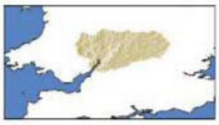

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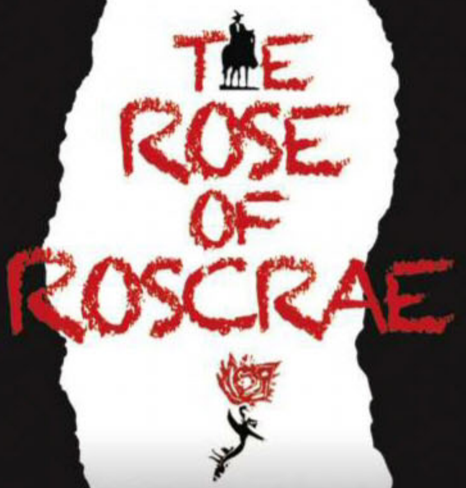
SMUGGLERS RECORDS



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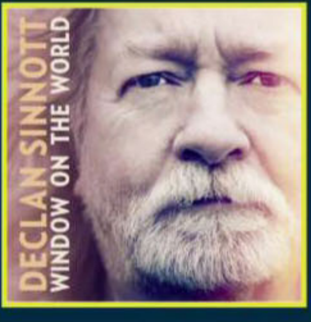

Declan Sinnott has been making music for fifty years. A founding member of Horslips and Moving Hearts, he also guided the career of Mary Black for thirteen years.
More recently he has been Christy Moore's right-hand man and producer. He released his first solo album in 2012. Window on the World is his second, a stronger, leaner, more confident record, with the songs very much centre stage. *Out May 11th*
JUST THE NOISE

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PROPER

A slip of the tongue

Irked at only modest returns on a trio of big-budget albums, the free-spirited SFA went on 'pop strike'. Then, their DIY Welsh-language LP was a hit. By **Pat Gilbert**.

Super Furry Animals

★★★★

Mwng

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

When Creation label boss Alan McGee first saw Super Furry Animals play live, the story goes he advised them to stop performing songs in their native Welsh language and instead sing in English – to which their bemused reply was, "We already do." Frontman Gruff Rhys's viscous vocal delivery aside, electing to write in English was a necessity in 1995 if SFA were ever going to transfer from their anarcho-techno roots into the pop mainstream; and besides a few B-sides, English would be their idiom, from the wizardly pop-psych of debut LP *Fuzzy Logic*, through to the increasingly shiny chart electronica of *Radiator* (1997) and *Guerrilla* (1999).

But then, in May 2000, came *Mwng*, a whole album of low-key Welsh-language songs recorded in just two weeks and released on the band's own Placid Casual label, following Creation's sudden collapse. A mostly morose, bucolic, slate-grey record, it should by rights have had fan-only appeal: instead, it made the UK Top 20, was the band's international best-seller up to that point, became the biggest-selling Welsh-language record ever; and was commended by an Early Day Motion in the House Of Commons for its promotion of the language and culture of Wales.

"It took us by surprise," admits Rhys. "We didn't have any expectations for it at all. But it made us happy."

Mwng had begun haphazardly in the early months of 1999, when Rhys demoed a collection of songs at SFA producer Gorwel Owen's home on the island of Anglesey. The fact they were written in his first language, Welsh, was at that point no big deal. But returning to his family home in nearby Bethesda following a relationship break-up, the singer's impulse to record an LP in the band's mother tongue grew more powerful. Forays into his old record collection reacquainted him with Welsh-language artists such as cult '70s folkie Meic Stevens, Huw Jones and new wave act Datblygu.

"Welsh is an old, poetic language, and the rules of its poetry are quite strict," Rhys explains. "Because there are less pop songs in Welsh, it's easier to avoid the pitfalls of singing in English, the rock clichés. So they're suitable for different types of record. English is more… trashy."

When his bandmates joined him a month later, the songs developed organically, contrasting with the lengthy layering and endless 'sound laboratory' experimentation that had produced *Guerrilla* at Peter Gabriel's Real World studio the previous summer. The new material seemed to absorb Anglesey's wintry coastal bleakness – Y Gwyneb Iau ('Hey Liverface') with its doleful trumpet and melody; the sad-eyed folk air of Nythod Cacwn ('Oh Beehives'); and a haunting cover of Datblygu's Y Teimlad ('The Feeling').

Super Furry Animals were aware that this bold reassertion of their Welshness didn't come without its dangers; and not just possible commercial suicide, but possession by demons. This occurs, ancient folklore dictates, whenever anyone sings in the Welsh tongue. Rhys confronted this fear directly on Ymaelodi Â'r Ymylon ('Joining The Periphery'), its jaunty acoustic bounce and strange, operatically-sung bridges reflecting the song's mixed message of outsider pride and hubristic fear.

Wales came to suffuse the album. Confirmation in a 1999 census that the number of native speakers was declining inspired the eerie, desolate fairground waltz of Pan Ddaw'r Wawr ('As Dawn Breaks'), matched only for epic cheerlessness by the funereal jazz electronica of closer Mawrth Oer Ar Y Blaned Neifion ('A Cold Mars On Neptune'). Sarn Helen, meanwhile, is a spaghetti western hymn to the lost Roman road that connected the north and south of the country.

Yet to give the impression that *Mwng* is as chilly, damp and forlorn as the bleak landscape in which it was conceived would be false. SFA's ear for a pop tune is innate, and at least three songs here – more if you include playful, gaming-character inspired bonus tracks like Calimero and Trons Mr Urdd, originally released in 1997 as the B-sides to Hermann Loves Pauline and which appeared on expanded US edition *Mwng Bach* – are like beams of celestial light breaking through the low, glowering cloud.

The clue is in the title of Ysbeidiau Heulog ('Sunny Intervals'), a typically odd collision of disparate styles – in this case frantic ska with radio-jingle choruses – while the summery guitar riff of Dacw Hi ('There She Is') and catchy prog-skronk of Drygioni ('Mischief') complete the idea of an album torn from the heart of a songwriter never quite certain if the world is a place of bliss, fun or infernal torment.

After the album was recorded – unfussily, at Cardiff's Famous Studios – overdubs were completed at Owen's Anglesey bungalow. Cosmic blessing came on the last day of mixing in the form of August 1999's dramatic solar eclipse; but back in terrestrial London, Creation was selling out to Sony, and thus, for the modest sum of £6,000, the group were able to buy the rights to an album whose predicted sales graph looked, quite frankly, rather modest.

But the Welsh themes and words – unfathomable, but all the more charming for that – were to prove a bonus, rather than a barrier, and *Mwng* (translated as 'Mane'), with its atmospheric evocation of misty foreshores, marginal communities, ghostly roads and frosty planets, touched a nerve with record-buyers and climbed to Number 11 in the UK chart.

In keeping with *Mwng*'s otherworldliness, test-pressings for the new 3-LP vinyl edition – deluxe versions add *Mwng Bach*, John Peel sessions and live material – were delivered to the band on the morning of the March 2015 solar eclipse. "There's a celestial thing working behind this album," concludes Gruff Rhys. Who could ever doubt it?

KEY TRACKS

- Ysbeidiau Heulog
- Y Teimlad
- Y Gwyneb Iau
- Mawrth Oer Ar Y Blaned Neifion

"SINGING IN WELSH, IT'S EASIER TO AVOID THE PITFALLS, THE ROCK CLICHES. ENGLISH IS MORE… TRASHY."

Gruff Rhys

Rob Hann/Retna/Photoshot, Photoshot

BACK STORY: THE AFTERMATH

- "You can't predict a record's impact. We were really happy it did so well, but equally we didn't want to over-egg the pudding playing at Welsh castles, like triumphalists. We kept it subtle and only toured *Mwng* in America, Japan and the Reading Festival. We didn't play it in Wales at all – we thought the gigs would be too emotional for the audience and us." *Gruff Rhys*

Restless natives: Super Furry Animals circa *Mwng*, (from left) Dafydd Ieuan, Huw Bunford, Gruff Rhys, Cian Ciaran, Guto Pryce.

FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS

Frank Black And The Catholics

★★★★

The Complete Recordings

COOKING VINYL. CD

The A-Z of Frank's other band – literally!

The idea of organising an entire six-album *oeuvre*, plus outtakes and oddities, alphabetically across six discs, is fittingly outside-the-box from the man who, as Black Francis, helped reimagine rock in the Pixies. During the Catholics' active service (1997-2003), they were viewed largely as a pesky obstacle to Frank's regrouping with Kim Deal and crew. The Catholics' remit was to allow their leader to pursue trad songcraft – less loud-quiet alt-surrealism, more rootsy rock, with streaks of blues and country. At 12 years' (and an excellent recent Pixies album's) distance, these Papists sound anything but straightforward, ably navigating a compositional logic every bit as nutty as Debaser or Cactus, just with the sonic derangement notched down, and the odd deft pedal-steel lick chipped in. The A-Z-ing only underlines consistent quality: even two covers of Tom Waits' The Black Rider don't queer the pitch – the second's hilarious surf rendition. A seventh disc collects rollicking demoes for '02's *Black Letter Days*.

Andrew Perry

Various

★★★★

Hung On You: More From The Gerry Goffin & Carole King Songbook

ACE. CD/DL

Fourth volume of hits and rarities from the New York husband and wife team.

Goffin & King's relationship played out like one of their songs: teen romance, pregnancy, wedlock, infidelity, heartbreak. They would continue to write together after their divorce in 1969, but their best often came when they were writing from inside the eye of the storm. The Righteous Brothers' Hung On You from 1965 plunges the emotional tumult of one-sided love into Spector's Wall of Sound. It's heart-palpitating in its giddy, indulgent rush. Produced by Nick Venet, 1967's Road To Nowhere by The Hearts & Flowers, meanwhile, foretells the pair's painful break up in a harmony folk-punk setting. Genre exercises produce timeless classics too though: The Cookies' Will Power is the apotheosis of mid-'60s Brill Building pop; Theola Kilgore's It's Gonna Be Alright is church-rooted golden age soul.

Lois Wilson

The Orlons: rare gold from the Goffin & King songbook.

Bunny Lion

★★★

Red

FANTASY MEMORY. CD/DL/LP

Overdue reissue of rare roots DJ album, produced by Linval Thompson.

In the roots reggae era, future dancehall crooner Puddy Roots was a sound system DJ, known as Puddy Lion. He voiced an album's worth of material for the leading roots producer Linval Thompson at King Tubby's studio in 1979, but when the album surfaced in England, it erroneously credited 'Bunny Lion', causing it to sink without a trace. Though his later singing work had greater impact, he's a convincing DJ and Thompson's rock-solid rhythms give this set its overall shape, drawing from Mystic I material and Linval's own vocal work. Puddy's lyrics are all over the place, tackling the tribulation facing the average Kingstonian on the mis-titled Jubilation, male-female relations on Girl Rockers, and the irresistible nature of dub on Bubblin' Dub. The audio is pristine, and brief interviews with Linval and Puddy help place the disc within its proper context.

David Katz

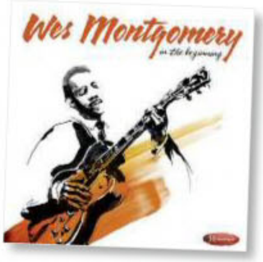
Wes Montgomery

★★★

In The Beginning

RESONANCE. CD/DL

Portrait of a jazz guitar genius as a young man.



With his use of block chords, parallel octaves and horn-like phrasing, Wes Montgomery proved to be one of the most important guitarists in jazz history. His period in the limelight was spectacularly short – largely because he died from a heart attack aged 43 in 1968 – but his unique style was profoundly influential, even for non-jazz fretboardists, such as The Who's Pete Townshend, who recalls his early admiration for Montgomery in this 2-CD set's copious linernotes. Mostly comprised of incredibly well-preserved live recordings that the guitarist made as part of the Montgomery Brothers (which included his siblings Buddy and Monk) in his home town, Indianapolis, in the '50s, this ace compilation also includes five recently discovered studio cuts that were recorded in 1955 for the fledgling Epic label with Quincy Jones at the helm.

Charles Waring

Curtis Knight & The Squires

★★★

You Can't Use My Name: The RSVP/PPX Sessions

EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/LEGACY. CD/DL/LP

Hendrix captured on the cusp of legend.

YOU CAN'T USE MY NAME

Jimi Hendrix was not versed in the language of contractual fine print, and in 1965 got himself legally bound to Curtis Knight – a so-so soul singer not destined to accomplish anything beyond record with Jimi as his lead guitarist. When originally released in 1967-68, these recordings were recognised as a crime against the name artist, but in retrospect they're a revelatory look at sideman Hendrix. The strut in his Strat shows he's hungry to blow the walls of anonymity with infinite imagination, physical strength and souped-up Curtis Mayfield-inspired riffage in material that ranges from funky fluff to damn good. The opening cut, How Would You Feel, is a featherweight lift from Like A Rolling Stone, but Fool For You Baby is a moody major/minor chord little gem. And Gloomy Monday – tracked by the misguided guitarist with his star already in ascent in '67 – is filled with magnificent, chunky fills.

Michael Simmons

Van Der Graaf Generator

★★★★

After The Flood: Van Der Graaf Generator At The BBC 1968-1977

UNIVERSAL. CD

Complete BBC sessions from the group's first decade.

VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR
AFTER THE FLOOD

Van Der Graaf always stood out – and still do – from the progressive rock pack, due to their volatile group chemistry and wide dynamic range. Here that encompasses the dreamy post-coital languor of Afterwards and the forbidding edifice of Man-Erg, with its hymnal tune cut with monstrously ugly riffing. And what makes this 2-CD set more than just an alternative greatest hits is that the performances capture the band's of-the-moment ethos, which could border on the chaotic, but is what made them so exciting. Killer, from a 1971 In Concert, is a case in point: Peter Hammill intones theatrically over neo-Stax horn lines, then on Hugh Banton's organ break it sounds like he's wrestling to get the instrument under control as it careens into the astringent paint-stripping skronk of David Jackson's electric sax solo. Like many songs here it equals, maybe even betters, the recorded version.

Mike Barnes

Gordon Giltrap

★★★

Time To Reflect: A Personal Anthology

ACROBAT. CD/DL

4-CD box set by enduring British guitar hero.

GORDON GILTRAP
TIME TO REFLECT

Where so many of his contemporaries fell by the wayside, Gordon Giltrap adapted, developed and endured. A prolific composer and a lithe, adept and highly imaginative acoustic and electric guitarist, he emerged in the buoyant London folk scene of the 1960s alongside Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, but swiftly adopted an approach using greater embellishment that drove him into more spiritual, classical, orchestral and prog rock spheres. Sadly, this isn't, as you might assume, a full career retrospective, but a 62-track set drawn mostly from four releases – *Elegy* (1987), *Music For The Small Screen* (1995), *Under This Blue Sky* (2002) and *Drifter* (2004). Brian May has a cameo role along with Midge Ure, Steve Howe and Rick Wakeman on a 1993 remake of Giltrap's biggest hit, Heartsong, and his extensive sleevenotes offer entertaining background, but a more complete retrospective still awaits.

Colin Irwin

Tropic thunder

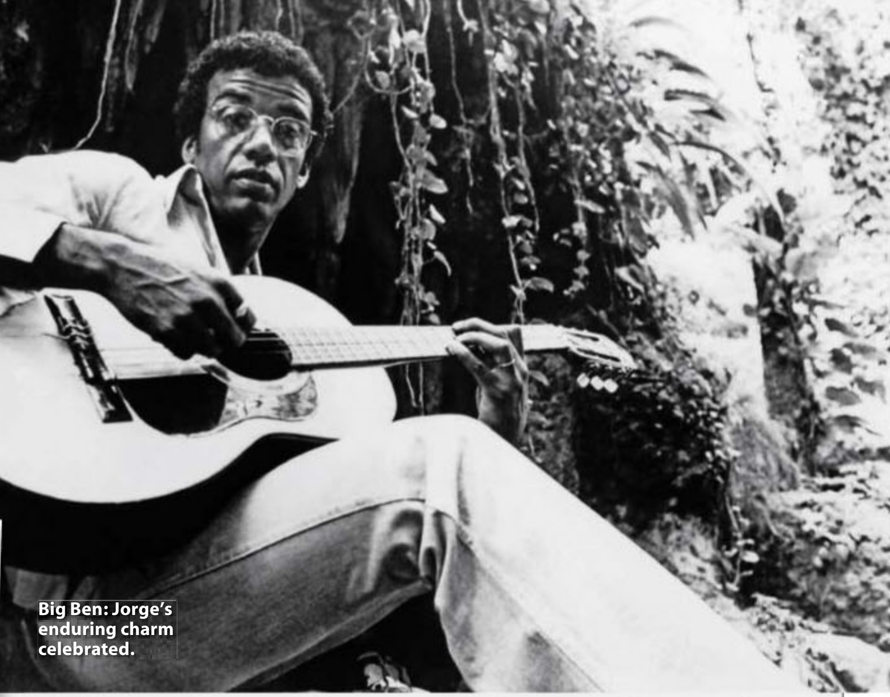
A classic chapter in the storied career of a Brazilian legend, back after many years out of print. By Jim Irvin.

Jorge Ben

★★★★★

Ben

REAL GONE MUSIC. CD



Big Ben: Jorge's enduring charm celebrated.

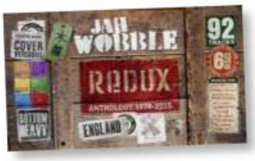
WHEN TROPICALIA burst upon Brazil at the end of the 1960s, its founders acknowledged the influence of an earlier swimmer against the tide, Jorge Ben, who'd been going his own way in the country's notoriously prescribed pop scene since 1963, when he'd changed the game with his very first single, Mas Que Nada, a global success. Even if you think you've never heard of him you'll know that tune. Despite his importance and consistently excellent output, Ben hasn't acquired the kind of cachet enjoyed by Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, Gal Costa and the like, and his catalogue has been handled inconsistently over the years, randomly falling in and out of print. A recent 15-CD box of his Philips output, *Salve Jorge!*, was long overdue, but sadly only available here as an elusive, expensive import.

Ben, who now trades as Jorge Ben Jor, was born Jorge Menezes in Rio in 1945 and adopted his Ethiopian mother's maiden name as a professional handle. Discovered by the head of the Philips label performing Mas Que Nada in a club, Ben's strengths were youthful energy and street-born directness, qualities he retained and used for gently prodding the status quo. Labelled as a samba artist, his first four albums, produced by Armando Pittigliani, were recorded with jazzy big bands, but his music transcended genre – he injected it with his country's colours and gave his catchy melodies a rhythmic drive that wasn't as pure or polite as samba or bossa nova. Keen to break free from the big band sound, he left Philips after those LPs. His brilliant 1967 experiment with rock arrangements *O Bidú* (Start) paved the way for the tropicalistas, who championed his self-titled 1969 return to Philips as a masterpiece.

By the '70s, Jorge was on a creative roll. 1971's *Negro É Lindo* (Black Is Beautiful) was superb. And then he dropped this beauty; his most stripped-back record yet, arrangements focusing largely on his voice, acoustic guitar, a prominent bass, understated percussion, and joyful backing singers. It helped make him a superstar at home.

Every track's a gem, but the album's original second side shows off the simple recipe best. There's the bubbling Quem Cochicha O Rabo Espicha, taken at a nippy pace; the more relaxed Caramba!; the lovely Que Nega É Essa, with its winning spontaneity, the shaky vocal feeling as if the song's just been written. Another ballad, As Rosas Eram Todas Amarelas (All The Roses Were Yellow) is given snaky grace by flanged acoustic guitar and poignancy by massed vocals and a whistling coda. To round off, there's the debut of a Ben classic, Taj Mahal (the song borrowed by Rod Stewart and Carmine Appice for Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?), coloured with a few strings, in which Jorge uses his guitar like a sitar, sings a repeated "te te re te" phrase instead of lyrics and mimics a trumpet solo with his voice. It's this impromptu, sketchy quality that gives *Ben* its enduring charm.

The album was released outside Brazil at the time – I got a UK copy from a bargain bin – but it proved fruitless. Let's hope this long-overdue set – expanded with a handful of excellent rarities from the period, including an updated Mas Que Nada – helps redress that. Better late than never.



Jah Wobble

★★★★

Redux

CHERRY RED. CD/LP

John Wardle's journey tracked on 92-track box set.

On *Redux*'s six CDs – *Greatest Hits*, *The Eighties*, *World Roots*, *Jazz*, *Ambient Spoken Word* and *Covers* – there's a parallel between Wobble's stint as a London tube driver and his epic journeying along different musical lines. Thirty-six years since wielding volcanic dubby bass for PiL, he defines 'maverick', quickly abandoning post-punk strictures for a pre-punk mindset, embracing musics Eastern, African and beyond. Each CD is a psycho-geographic map in itself; to wit, *Greatest Hits*' leaps from PiL to the stoner dance of Visions Of You and Becoming More Like God (Wobble's two Top 40 hits, re-recorded as bonuses here, to no audible advantage) to two new tracks, almost unprecedented – and hilarious – dalliances in commercial punk (Let's Go Psycho) and psych (Merry-Go-Round). Also new: *Covers*' instrumental homages, from Midnight Cowboy to Take Five, Wobble's youth and his love of sound reinvigorated, reinvented, respected.

Martin Aston

ET Mensah And The Tempos

★★★★

King Of Highlife Anthology

RETROAFRIC. CD/DL

The highlife giant's exemplary retrospective.

E.T. MENSAH
THE TEMPOS

Ghanaian saxophonist, trumpeter and bandleader Emmanuel Tetty Mensah was a key figure in the development of highlife, a hybrid of European ballroom music and swing jazz with Latin, Caribbean and African styles. This brilliant 4-CD box set draws together 69 tracks from the 1950s and '60s, when Mensah and his ever-changing Tempos commanded a massive following throughout West Africa. The audio has been lovingly restored (from the British Library's audio archive), and John Collins' 64-page booklet tells the entire Tempos story, with fascinating testimony from ET, his brother Yebuah, and others. The music itself is truly to be treasured, from the Sly Mongoose adaptation All For You, to calypso excursions such as Club Girl and Guinea-Mali-Ghana, to oddball instrumentals such as Agriculture and Mucho Mambo. It all hearkens to highlife's golden age, heightening Mensah's overarching influence.

David Katz

Virginia Wing

★★★★

Measures Of Joy

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

Deluxe coloured vinyl double LP of kosmische poppers' hauntological debut.

Virginia Wing are an abstruse concoction. The south London band's amalgam of found sounds, spectral drones, skeletal post-punk rhythms and Alice Merida Richards' detached, Nico-esque vocals possess a rare ability to dive deep beneath the skin. Farfisa-driven opener The Body Is A Clear Place sets the tone, as elements of spoken word, manufactured noise and other sonic debris drift through a ghostly mix that flirts hard and fast with the avant-garde while retaining a sly pop lustre. Slow to reveal itself on a casual listen, the cascading melody of Estuary becomes depth-charged with repetition, while Meshes' swarming keyboard figure morphs into a thousand amorous bees. With downloads from 2013's Extended Play EP – fans of Broadcast, Stereolab and Ela Orleans should form an orderly queue.

Andy Cowan

Jackie DeShannon

★★★★

All The Love: The Lost Atlantic Recordings

REAL GONE. CD

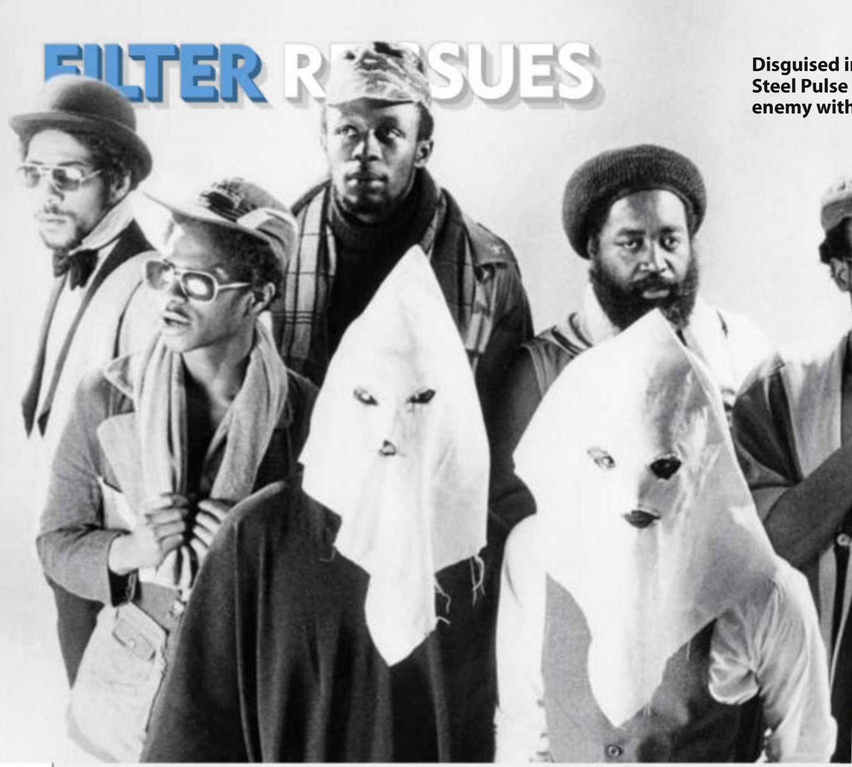
Singer-songwriter's forgotten cache of treasure.

A chance meeting with record producer Jerry Wexler on a flight from Los Angeles to New York in 1972 led to DeShannon (who'd spent most of the '60s recording for Liberty) signing with Atlantic Records. Wexler masterminded her label debut, *Jackie*, but sessions in 1973 for a proposed second Atlantic LP, produced by Tom Dowd, ended up being canned. Seven Dowd-helmed recordings were exhumed for Rhino Handmade's now out-of-print *Jackie… Plus* reissue in 2003, but here they're augmented by seven more newly-discovered songs as well as four fine Van Morrison-written/produced bonus tunes from the same year. It all adds up to a fascinating aural portrait of where DeShannon was at in 1973. Stylistically, the singer is deep into her country-infused singer/songwriter mode and her performances, together with the material and arrangements, are uniformly excellent.

Charles Waring

JACKIE
DeSHANNON
ALL THE LOVE
THE LOST
RECORDINGS

Getty Images



Disguised in violence: Steel Pulse and the enemy within.

Heavy metal

Britain's first home-grown Rasta stars get the deluxe treatment. By Lois Wilson.

Steel Pulse

★★★★

Handsworth Revolution

ISLAND. CD

IN 1978, Island Records hired photographer Dennis Morris to take press shots for Steel Pulse's debut single for the label, Ku Klux Klan. The Birmingham seven-piece donned white Klan hoods when performing the song live, and Morris and the group thought the image would make for striking promo photos. When Island were handed the black-and-white portraits, they were horrified and relegated them to the bin.

Steel Pulse didn't set out to shock though. Instead, politicised by a reality defined by racism, violence and the National Front, their intention was to soundtrack their own experience of being black and British – as detailed explicitly on the title track of their debut album, named after the Birmingham inner city area where the band formed in 1975.

Indeed, it's Ku Klux Klan that provides the centrepiece of the album – issued here in deluxe form with its original eight tracks augmented by 12-inch mixes and a second disc of BBC sessions and dub cuts. Penned by bandleader David Hinds and produced by Godwin Logie and Steve Lillywhite, the song is classic roots reggae – melodic, soulful, lyrically compelling: "Walking along just kicking stones/Minding my own business/I come face to face, with my foe/Disguised in violence from head to toe," they sing.

"It was our way of interpreting the system we were up against," then-singer/percussionist Mykaell Riley told MOJO. "This was our experience and you were informed, whether you wanted to be or not, that things were different for you if you were black."

HANDSWORTH REVOLUTION
STEEL PULSE

The musical touchstone for the remainder of *Handsworth Revolution* is Bob Marley And The Wailers, perhaps unsurprisingly, since album producer Karl Pitterson had previously worked with the Wailers, who Steel Pulse would support on a 12-date European tour to coincide with the album release.

The title track chants down Babylon ("Doesn't justice stand for all?") over solemn organ and bass, Macka Splaff, a bouncy skank in tribute to weed, provides a blueprint for 2 Tone, and the hypnotic ruffneck rhythms of Prodigal Son hit the Top 40 when issued as their second single for Island.

Of the bonus cuts, Bun Dem, the flip to the Ku Klux Klan 12-inch, cloaks dub with blues harp, while the previously unissued BBC sessions recorded for John Peel from August 1977 and April '78 are stripped down, the group sounding tougher, more militant, particularly on extended versions of Bad Man and Prodigal Son.

Released in July 1978, the LP hit Number 9 and put paid to the notion that only reggae from Jamaica could be authentic and, well, any good. *Handsworth Revolution* was, and still is, crucial.

The Wake

★★★

Here Comes Everybody + Singles

FACTORY BENELUX. CD/DL

Thirtieth anniversary deluxe of indie stalwarts' best LP.

Formed by ex-Altered Images guitarist Gerard McNulty, The Wake were a beguiling lot, equally endearing and frustrating. A slavish debt to New Order – which attracted, rather than repelled, Factory – was leavened by an extra helping of pale remorse, akin to Felt's precious cargo with Postcardian awkwardness. McNulty's vocal was breathy and buried, like Bernard Sumner behind a gauzy veil. It's thinly stretched over a double CD (the original album is bolstered by 21 extras) but there are kernels of heart-tugging pop: O Pamela was later covered by covers project Nouvelle Vague, a glacial Torn Calendar is the album's secret weapon and one wonders if Future Islands knowingly borrowed Sail Through's lilting synth figure. Subsequent 45 Talk About The Past tried to be bolder, but Top Of The Pops was never going to call.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★★

Los Angeles Soul: Kent Modern's Black Music Legacy

KENT. CD/DL

A decade of soul from label that first gave us Etta James.

For this writer, Kent Modern's legacy lies in its '50s R&B recordings with Etta James, B.B. King, Richard Berry, et al. But the music here, spanning 1962 to '71, is still cracking, book-ended chronologically by the sweet girl-pop of Pat Hunt's You Are My First Love and the animated gospel of You're Gonna Miss Your Chance by Maurine Williams And The Mount Olive 2nd BC Choir. The remaining tracks are just as diverse, from lysergic soul (You Saved Me From Destruction by DiFosco aka Big Dee Irwin) and drop-to-your-knees pleas (Venetta Fields With The Ikettes' Give Me A Chance (Try Me)), to stand-tall protest (The Pace-Setters' Push On Jesse Jackson) and pure funk (The Windjammers' All That Shines Is Not Gold).

Lois Wilson

Loren Connors

Blues

★★★★

FAMILY VINEYARD. DL/LP

Airs

★★★★

RECITAL. DL/LP

Two rare releases by revered underground guitarist. Taylor Deupree remasters.

Originally released under the name Guitar Roberts, 1990's *Blues* is arguably one of this outlander Connecticut musician's landmark recordings. A re-envisioning of Southern guitar styles as tonally layered abstract expressionism, *Blues* – subtitled The 'Dark Paintings' Of Mark Rothko – also captures that haunted moonscape mood of encroaching darkness in the US painter's late works, Connors' guitar wailing like the long, dark tail of Blind Willie Johnson's Dark Was The Night, Cold Was The Ground, playing out in the heliosheath on the Voyager Golden Record. Originally released on cassette in 1999, *Airs* is warmer, more welcoming, 17 tranquil lyrical fragments that float like dust motes in a summer haze and work as the ideal palliative to the deep space chill of those tenebrous *Blues*.

Andrew Male

Bridget St. John

★★★

Dandelion Albums & BBC Sessions

CHERRY RED. CD

All the recordings from her time with John Peel's low-budget 'collective' label.

That deep, slightly plummy voice – sometimes a folksy Nico, sometimes a female Nick Drake – over hypnotic acoustic guitar, singing songs referencing buttercup sandwiches, hornbeams and magnolia trees, with titles like The Curious Crystals Of Unusual Purity or Barefeet And Hot Pavements; it's easy to hear the contemporary appeal that allowed Bridget to make several albums from 1969 onwards, notably a super-spare debut produced by John Peel, and its more elaborate follow-up, with producer Ron Geesin utilising flutes, oboes, celeste and strings. Sure, they're pretty windows onto the past, but you might find your attention wandering; her own material's more atmospheric than memorable and she doesn't always bring something new to the cover versions. That said, there's certainly an album's worth of beguiling stuff in these four discs, if you take the trouble to dig it out.

Jim Irvin

Bridget St John

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!
LET'S GET ROCKED IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT II

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BLACK STAR RIDERS

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DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
THERE'S A BIG WHEEL

Dusty Springfield

★★★

There's A Big Wheel

HOODOO. CD/DL

Here's Dusty: the early, pre-soul years.

This release serves a purpose. It fills in gaps, contains tracks that don't appear elsewhere and is neatly packaged with an admirable booklet to read whenever the music gets dull. And for those who regard Dusty as a soul icon, this could be dull indeed. For the music spans 1958-1962 when Dusty was briefly part of The Lana Sisters, a likeable pop group, and The Springfields, whose pop-folk approach scrubbed up like a glossy version of The Weavers. It's pleasant enough, decorated with flair and gusto ("It was extremely important to be cheerful," explained Dusty), but songs like Tzena, Tzena, Tzena and Goodnight Irene were not where the O'Brien heart resided. The map indicating the highway to Memphis was yet to be unfolded.

Fred Dellar

Eric Caboor And David Kauffman

★★★★

Songs From Suicide Bridge

MODERN CLASSICS/LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD/DL

Proto-Americana from 1984, as elegiac and bleak as its title suggests.

These two "loners" joined forces on the Los Angeles folk circuit in 1982. Out of time and vogue, drawing tens rather than thousands, and stuck in menial jobs, they conceded defeat, but as a dark in-joke recorded their most defeated songs and named the result after the Pasadena-to-LA bridge as famous for its concrete arches as its jumpers. It starts with Kiss Another Day Goodbye, setting a tone that aches, sighs and drifts, Kauffman raspier and Caboor more subdued, reminiscent of Mickey Newbury's stoic musical romanticism and a half-life lived in Hollywood's shadows. Acoustic guitar runs and bursts of electric frazzle enrich the picture, which reaches apotheosis on the eight-minute Backwoods. Of the 150 copies serviced to college radio, only Nova Scotia and Alaska DJs (used to inclement conditions) responded. Finale One More Day was a valiant stab at optimism; after 30 years, it's finally paid off.

Martin Aston

BEAUTY IS A RARE THING
ornette coleman
atlantic recordings

Ornette Coleman

★★★★★

Beauty Is A Rare Thing

WARNER JAZZ. CD/DL

Six CDs of all the avant-garde jazz alto sax man recorded for Atlantic between 1959-61.

When I first heard Ornette Coleman's 1961 album *This Is Our Music* I thought it was unlistenable. Sounds wonderful now. Maybe I wanted it to be difficult, to hear all the turmoil and confrontation that came with Ornette's arrival on the late '50s US jazz scene. Listening now to 40 chronologically arranged tracks from that dream line-up of Coleman, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins is a euphoric experience, Coleman's sax and Cherry's cornet in raw bright call-and-response, snorting, laughing and stretching blues phrases, tracked and circled by Haden's minimal bass and Higgins's forward-flashing drums. Then, wham, halfway into disc four, Haden and Higgins go, replaced by Scott La Faro and Jimmy Garrison on bass, Ed Blackwell on drums, and suddenly it feels like great music played in a small room. Something essential has gone. It's there in the title.

Andrew Male

THE KINGSTON SPRINGS SUITE
VINCE MATTHEWS and JIM CASEY

Vince Matthews And Jim Casey

★★★★

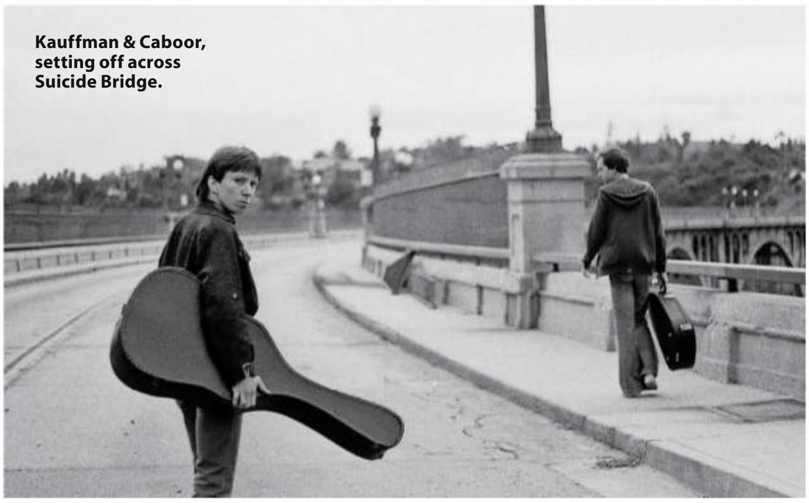
The Kingston Springs Suite

DELMORE RECORDING SOCIETY. CD/DL/LP

A big-hearted gem from Nashville's secret outlaw.

The late Vince Matthews was an almost-mythic songwriter in the shopping Nashville of the 1960s and '70s. He was a *poète maudit* – a literate character who carried a guitar in one hand and doom in the other and wrote killer songs for Johnny Cash, Gordon Lightfoot and Gene Watson. Matthews and pal Jim Casey composed this suite about his adopted hometown of Kingston Springs, Tennessee, celebrating its earthy values, then under threat from developers and the oxymoron of progress. Co-produced by Kristofferson, Cash, Shel Silverstein and Cowboy Jack Clement, it sat unreleased until now when its odes to kindness, eccentricity and moving slow resonate even more than in 1972 when it was recorded. If one needs further validation, Cash called the album's flat-out classic Melva's Wine "the greatest contemporary American folk song I've ever heard".

Michael Simmons



Kauffman & Caboor, setting off across Suicide Bridge.

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

SNEAKY FEELINGS
SNEAKY
FEELINGS
SEND YOU

Sneaky Feelings

Send You

FLYING NUN/CAPTURED TRACKS

Even in a scene as notoriously 'outsider' as New Zealand's fabled early '80s lo-fi 'Dunedin Sound', Sneaky Feelings were exiles, marked out by their ambition where others embraced parochialism. The four-piece's 1984 debut album owed more to The Byrds and '60s soul (particularly heard in the Orange Juice-like Strangers Again) than their contemporaries' beloved Velvet Underground. As the linernotes to this double album reissue point out, however, the Sneakies' recordings often sounded several thousand dollars short of the masterpieces they could have been, and *Send You* was poorly served by a flimsy original pressing. Now remastered from the original tapes and properly pressed in a gatefold sleeve, it sounds box fresh and vibrant instead of muddy and stodgy. Expanded with extra tracks, notably the later Husband House EP, *Send You* is a lost Kiwi jewel, finally achieving the ambitions of its creators 30 years too late. If only they'd redone that cover, too. *AF*

DETAIL
FIRST DETAIL

Detail

★★★

First Detail

RUNE GRAMMOFON. CD/LP

Earliest recordings of this Anglo-Norwegian jazz unit finally see the light of day.

Caught in spur-of-the-moment flight on the first date of a 1982 tour of Norway, the tapes from which *First Detail* is drawn have been languishing unheard for over three decades. Recently revisited by its sole surviving member, Nordic saxophone giant Frode Gjerstad, his eventual coming to terms with the loss of his bandmates has gifted the world with an exceptionally fresh-sounding set of free explorations. Originally intended as a quartet of Gjerstad, bassist Johnny Dyani, pianist Eivin One Pedersen and English drummer John Stevens, this particular outing is made still more unusual by Dyani's absence. Comprising three lengthy pieces of fast-moving improvisation, while the opening 24-minute torrent of saxophone, percussion and piano/organ propulsion is worth the price of admission alone, the rest is every bit as tempestuously enthralling.

Andrew Carden

Lawrence English

★★★★

The Peregrine

ROOM 40. CD/DL/LP

Hypnotic 2011 work from Brisbane-based electronic composer.

Like many before him, when Lawrence English first read The Peregrine, J.A. Baker's ascetic 1967 immersion in the Essex landscape and the "pouring away world" of this titular bird-of-prey, he was struck by both its stylistic beauty and its metaphysical power. The book changed his life, so much so that he made a record about it. From the deep organum plainchant of the opening track, October 1 – The Hunting Life, to the wind-whistling sonic polyphony of the album's closer, April 4 – And He Sleeps, *The Peregrine* plays like the ritual soundtrack to human-animal therianthropy: a detailed electronic rendering of another creature's soaring sensory world, that one might equally play behind closed doors as part of some magick rite, to help facilitate the metamorphosis from our own chaotic inward selves to the silent outward life of the bird.

Andrew Male

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FILEUNDER

Nature boy

Nat Cole and pre-soul: the neglected early work of a master, back on vinyl.
By Jim Irvin.

A stubborn kind of fellow: Marvin Gaye, often at odds with the boss.

Before 1971's *What's Going On* established him as a visionary artist, Marvin Gaye cut 15 albums for Motown – 10 solo and five duets. A couple of the later releases, *MPG* and *In The Groove* are occasionally cited as lesser classics, but anything earlier soundtracks a mercurial artist's search for himself on records that vary widely in quality. A new vinyl boxed set, *Marvin Gaye Volume 1 1961-65* (Universal) gathers seven albums; presumably the eight from 1966-71 will be *Volume 2*.

1961's debut, *The Soulful Moods of Marvin Gaye*, was only Motown's second album. Gaye was already at odds with label boss Berry Gordy about his musical direction, wishing to cut jazzy standards in the mode of his heroes Ray Charles and Nat King Cole, while Gordy wanted R&B – more commercial, cheaper to record. The debut was a messy compromise, hampered by Motown's inexperience and modest budget, a hilariously out-of-tune piano ruining My Funny Valentine and others. A Gordy-penned ballad, Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide isn't bad, but a twist-style rocker, Never Let You Go, is embarrassing. The awkward album flopped, forcing Marvin and Motown to regroup.

For a while, Gaye followed a curious double path, releasing jazzy albums without singles and R&B singles compiled into spotty albums. First of those, 1963's *That Stubborn Kind Of Fellow* ★★ named in honour of his first hit, is a brisk 26 minutes with four singles – Soldier's Plea, Hitch Hike, Pride & Joy and the title song – their truly unremarkable B-sides and a couple of fillers (one of which, Wherever I Lay My Hat, became a B-side eight years later).

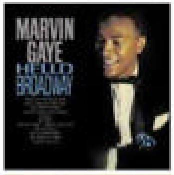
When I'm Alone I Cry ★★★★, from 1964, was his first decent album, the full orchestral arrangements giving his ambitions as a torch singer some credence. He's in great voice, if a decade late with this sound, on a lovely late-night suite, spoilt slightly by a mix that separates the voice and orchestra too much.

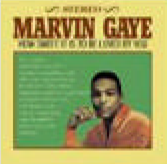
Similarly, *Hello Broadway* ★★★ and *A Tribute To The Great Nat King Cole* ★★ are all hangar reverb and sugar-frosted, distant strings; the former collects stage-show hits of the day like People and Hello Dolly, the latter allows Gaye to indulge himself over arrangements his pop fans weren't interested in and Cole's fans didn't need. He sings beautifully, but the tracks are saccharine.

The first duet LP, *Together* ★★, with Motown's star turn Mary Wells, has a cabaret feel, but Gaye and the label finally get it together with *How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You* ★★★★, his first set with the classic Motown sound; suddenly that velvet voice seems in the right context.

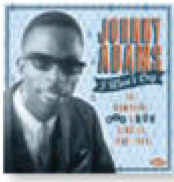
This box is handsome, but it's fair to say this isn't the music Gaye's huge reputation rests on. *Volume 2* will be where things start to get interesting.

MARVIN GAYE





> "SUDDENLY THAT VELVET VOICE SEEMS IN THE RIGHT CONTEXT."



Johnny Adams

★★★★

I Won't Cry

ACE. CD

The pining, hurt baritone of the Crescent City star nicknamed the Tan Canary shines on this comprehensive set of his 45s for the local Ric and Ron labels; the unsettling Mac Rebennack-penned A Losing Battle is a treat. *PG*

MURSHIDI AND SUFI SONGS

Deben Bhattacharya

★★★

Murshidi And Sufi Songs

ARC MUSIC. CD/DL

One of musicologist Deben Bhattacharya's last records was this set of Bangladesh's spiritual masters, the Murshidi, which sounds both beguiling and deeply human. *PA*

Dr.Feelgood

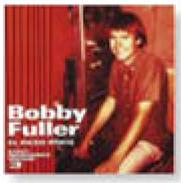
Dr. Feelgood

★★★

I'm A Man

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL

Subtitled *The Best Of The Wilko Johnson Years 1974-1977*, this a mixed bag of the Feelgods from that era, five of them revived last year for Johnson's *Going Back Home* album with Roger Daltrey. No sleevenotes, but solid entry-level stuff. *PG*



Bobby Fuller

★★★

El Paso Rock

NORTON. CD/DL

Volume 3 of early recordings from the tragic '60s Texas rocker has demos, live performances from a local bowling alley and a spirited early run through of I Fought The Law where he's robbing someone with a "shotgun". *PG*

Rockpalast
MAN

Man

★★★

Live At Rockpalast

SOULMUSIC. CD + DVD/DL

By April 1975 the Welsh psych improvisers, now a quartet, were in a Micky Jones/Deke Leonard twin-guitar groove, as on marathons C'mon and Many Are Called, But Few Get Up. Drummer Terry Williams also a constant pleasure. *GB*

GARNET MIMMS
Looking For You

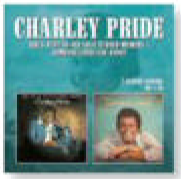
Garnet Mimms

★★★★

Looking For You

KENT SOUL. CD

Wonderful Philly soul voice of range and perfect control, the 28 tracks here comprise his UA and Veep 45s, starting with '63 showstopper Cry Baby. A Quiet Place, It Was Easier To Hurt Her, I'll Take Good Care Of You, all solid gold soul. *GB*



Charley Pride

★★

She's Just An Old Love Turned Memory

MORELLO. CD

No-frills two-fer of Pride's RCA-Victor LP from 1977 with the following year's *Someone Loves You Honey*. Features oddly understated rendition of Rhinestone Cowboy on *She's Just An Old Love...*. *PG*

Various

★★★★

Punk USA

RHINO. CD

Another super-budget *Original Album Series* box (£12 on Amazon), with five classics – and genre touchstones – including Television's *Marquee Moon*, Richard Hell And The Voidoids' *Blank Generation* plus Dead Boys, Misfits and Fear. *PG*

Rex, Tom Beard

FILTER REISSUES EXTRA

Michael Chapman

★★★

Live At Rockpalast

REPERTOIRE. DVD+CD

Low-key Yorkshire folkie weaves six-string magic on German TV in 1975 and, for two songs, in '78. Mesmerising fingerboard close-ups, but not much to see otherwise, hence CD of both shows in full. *PG*

Echo & The Bunnymen

★★★★

Do It Clean

SALVO/RHINO. CD

Top value 2CD anthology spans 1979-87. Takes in psychedelic bombast of the first four LPs, bits from the Bunnymen's patchier self-titled LP, extras include a cover of People Are Strange from The Lost Boys OST. *JB*

England Dan & John Ford Coley

★★★

The Atlantic Albums +

RHINO. CD

It's lush harmony clusters a go-go on the US soft rockers four mid-to-late '70s albums (*Nights Are Forever* through to *Dr Heckle And Mr Jive*), led by the timeless I'd Really Love To See You Tonight. *PG*

Esquivel And His Orchestra

★★★

Latin-Esque

ÉL/CHERRY RED. CD

Comp of late '50/early '60s experiments in stereo by the Mexican space-age pop/exotica pioneer; some tracks recorded in two Hollywood studios in attempts to increase the spatial sonic spread. *PG*

Billie Holiday

★★★★★

Lady Day

SONY. CD

Grammy Award-winning 2001 4-CD box of Holiday's Columbia recordings, 1933-44 – the bulk of her peerless output – although there is no Strange Fruit (too political for the label) or That Ole Devil Called Love (it was originally on Decca). *PG*

Hawkwind

★★★★

Coded Languages

ATOMHENGE. CD/DL

Hawkwind's under-valued early '80s tenure on RCA/Active is celebrated with this excellent live set recorded across two nights at London's Hammersmith Odeon in '82. A worthy addition to an ever-sprawling catalogue. *PA*

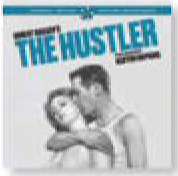
Eddie Holland

★★★★

Eddie Holland

SOUL JAM. CD

Before he joined brother Brian and Lamont Dozier as Motown's hit machine, the younger 'H' hoped for stardom. This 1962 LP, with its 15 extras, drips with his Jackie Wilson sound that attracted Berry Gordy. *GB*



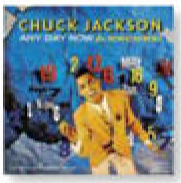
Kenyon Hopkins

★★★★

The Hustler OST

SOUNDTRACK FACTORY. CD

Hopkins' suitably gritty jazz soundtrack to Newman and Gleason's epic 1961 pool-hall tussle features superb players like Milt Hinton and Hank Jones. With OSTs to Newman's Paris Blues (Ellington) and The Long Hot Summer (Alex North). *PG*



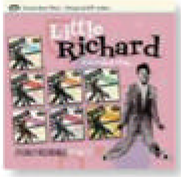
Chuck Jackson

★★★★

Any Day Now/Encore!

SOUL JAM. CD

Fine interpreter of Brill Building and East Coast material. These two Wand LPs from '62 and '63 burst from the speakers as Chuck's big, confident voice addresses Burt Bacharach's Any Day Now, lots of Luther Dixon soul-pop delights and more. *GB*



Little Richard

★★★★

Extended Play…

GVC. CD/DL

Seven EPs released between 1957 and '60 comprised the 28 Specialty sides here as the founding father of rock'n'roll and ace band hit full throttle – Tutti Frutti, She's Got It, Long Tall Sally, Ready Teddy, Rip It Up, Lucille etc. Good golly! *GB*

Bill Nelson

★★★★

Noise Candy

COCTEAU DISCS/ESOTERIC RECORDINGS. CD/DL

Reissue of an ultra-rare 2002 six- disc box of home recordings, culled from 1990 to 2000, that cuts across genres at will. *Noise Candy* confirms Bill Nelson to be one of the finest and most underrated guitarists in Britain. *PA*

Pelican

★★★

The Anthology

RPM. CD

Formed in summer '73, over by late '75, Icelandic six-piece Pelican made music full of whimsy, from epic passages (Amnesia) to soft-prog moves (Warm August Night). On this 2-CD anthology, their quirks account for their charm. *PA*

Various

★★★

Rock! Wreck! & Rule!

CHERRY RED. CD

The Meteors, King Kurt, Guana Batz and Demented Are Go star in this solid 2-CD summation of the '80s UK psychobilly scene; lesser-knowns like Sugar Puff Demons and Frantic Flintstones impress. *PG*

Ravi Shankar

★★★★

The Sounds Of India/Improvisations/Three Ragas

MINUET. CD

This trio of excellent LPs alerted the West to Indian classical music in the late '50s/early '60s; LA jazzers join Ravi for 1962's proto-fusion *Improvisations*. *PG*

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Roger Daltrey, Jenny Hval, The Rolling Stones, Florence + The Machine, Leftfield, Bad Company, Jamie xx, Cheikh Lo, Melody Gardot and more…

How big? How blue? Florence + The Machine reveal all next month…

He's got the funk taped: Sly Stone relaxes in London, July 16, 1973; (inset opposite page) Sly And The Family Stone in funk finery.

FAMILYMAN

Sly Stone

The thaumaturge of funk, soul and rock. By Geoff Brown.

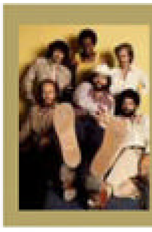
The creation of his second masterpiece was still a couple of years away when, in 1969, Sly Stone launched into the pivotal year of his career, the 12 months in which his great leap forward gestated.

During those 12 months he released his fourth studio album, and first masterpiece, *Stand!* That five-star summation of the multiracial, male-female Family Stone's style mixed celebrations of life with songs whose sociopolitical thrust came in soul, R&B, rock, pop and jazz arrangements and the funk he'd given a hipped West Coast twist. It all seemed a glorious affirmation of the hopes held out by the decade just closing.

Sly topped that in August when the Family Stone's set was one of the high points at the Woodstock Festival. Yet by December his sound-shifting, shape-changing single Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin) had intuited the darker days to come. Sly had discovered the Maestro Rhythm King drum machine which gave him greater control of the Family Stone sound and would gradually nudge the musicians to the peripheries, stoking up resentments and paranoia as the band slowly fragmented. Thereafter, the exuberance of the late-'60s music would give way to a muddier sound, and the lyrics were less open and inclusive. Moreover, his live appearances became persistently and provocatively unreliable as drugs sapped his creative juices. While he was making great records, he could just about get away with the contempt he seemed to be showing to paying customers; but when the recorded music lost its moxie, the audiences at his concerts slowly came to comprise eternal optimists and car-crash chasers.

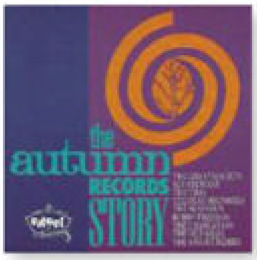
And that is where we leave Sly Stone, formerly Sylvester Stewart, raised on gospel, fed a diet of doo wop, jazz, blues and R&B, a DJ, songwriter, producer, singer and multi-instrumentalist whose grasp of soul, pop and rock invigorated funk so thoroughly that it sold James Brown's rhythm-based black music to the mass white audience.

> “THE FAMILY STONE MIXED CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE WITH SOCIO-POLITICAL THRUST.”



CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Sly And The Family Stone LPs. Next month we want your Little Feat Top 10. Send your selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Little Feat' and we'll print the best comments.



10 Various
The Autumn Records Story

EDSEL 1986 £11.35

You Say: “Fascinating production entrees before Sly's story began in earnest.” ***Stuart Henry, via e-mail***

Included on this compilation of tracks from a San Francisco label, owned by local DJ Tom Donahue, are several mid-'60s productions by Sly Stewart, aka Sylvester Stewart, who was also a Frisco DJ back then. The tracks that announce his arrival capture the energy of the era and range from The Mojo Men's raucous, garagey She's My Baby to Bobby Freeman's Cmon And Swim (Part 1) and S-W-I-M. Although only dance-craze cash-ins, Sly finds the best in Freeman's tone – a little like the twistin' Sam Cooke, in fact. Elsewhere, Sly makes an appearance as an artist, again under the Sly Stewart moniker, Buttermilk, an organ-led instrumental with a strong bass line and mouth-harp solo, being the best.

DANCE TO THE MUSIC
SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

4 Sly And The Family Stone
Dance To The Music

EPIC 1968 £6.95, DE LUXE EDITION £24.07, DOWNLOAD £5.99

You Say: “For me, the quintessential pop-soul statement.” ***Michael O'Neill, via e-mail***

As a DJ in San Francisco, Sly knew how to programme a radio show and responded to Epic's request for a more commercial record for the second Family Stone album with this first classic in the catalogue. “All the squares go home!” the title track shouts, a theme expanded on in the 12-minute three-part Dance To The Medley, full of multi-instrumental dexterity, vocal variety from doo wop and scat to James Brown get-down riffing. The track Higher has the prototype of the chorus to I Want To Take You Higher; Music Lover, part three of the Medley, sends the Higher idea into outerspace; strong ensemble playing throughout.

Legacy Recordings Sony Music Archive, Alamy, Getty Images

SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
A WHOLE NEW THING

9 Sly And The Family Stone
A Whole New Thing

EPIC 1967 £4.94, DOWNLOAD £5.89

You Say: "It really was! Years ahead of its time… a joyous listen." ***Bari Johnnie Johnson, MOJO Facebook***

It's doubtful if Epic realised quite *what* a New Thing they were unleashing on this debut. Even now, the Family Stone sounds an impressively tight and well-drilled unit, standing at the crossroads of funk, rock and soul, ready to head off in all musical directions at once. From the war dance drums-and-horns riff of If This Room Could Talk to the pop catchiness of Run, Run, Run and the frantic soul revue tribute of Turn Me Loose, there are constant changes of tone and tempo – Larry Graham's bass, and bass vocal, anchors the ballad Let Me Hear It From You and less successful hardhitter Bad Risk. Advice is good, but the weirdness and paranoia of later is apparent in I Hate To Love Her, Bad Risk and Dog.

I'm Just Like You
SLY'S STONE FLOWER
1969-70

8 Various
I'm Just Like You: Sly's Stone Flower

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC 2014 £9.69

You Say: "Side productions from Sly's most genius phase. You need this." ***Bob Nash, via e-mail***

A rare plant that bloomed for just two years, Stone Flower Records launched in 1969 and grew out of the production company Sly and manager David Kapralik had set up two years earlier. It featured four singles, all here, by three acts – Little Sister, including his sibling Vaetta, the strong soul singer Joe Hicks and multiracial sextet 6ix – to which this CD adds 10 previously unreleaseds. Sly's fingerprints are all over the music – Little Sister B-side Stanga hits the groove; 6ix sound looser on You Can, We Can; Hicks's Life & Death In G & A finds him in *There's A Riot…* territory and Sly's stoned funk, pop and soul productions here clearly parallel his concurrent work on that album.

7 Sly And The Family Stone
Small Talk

EPIC 1974 £6.14, DOWNLOAD £5.99

You Say: "The original band had gone, but Sly still produced great songs." ***Anthony Kerr, MOJO Facebook***

Kathleen Silva, briefly Sly's wife, and son Sylvester Jr, are pictured on the sleeve of an LP that mixes ruminations on family (title tracks, Mother Beautiful) with superior tracks of Stone power – notably the driving start to side two, in old vinyl money, Loose Booty and Holdin' On, and a later, frantic, Livin' While I'm Livin'. But gentler vibes are the norm (Wishful Thinkin'; a lovely doo wop closer This Is Love). "Time for changin', rearrangin'," Sly sings in his final US Top 40 hit single Time For Livin'. Sadly, there is no new direction. A track like Can't Strain My Brain, despite its jauntiness, suggests the artistic lassitude that would, after 1975's so-so solo album *High On You*, consume the next 40 years.

SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE
HIGHER!

6 Sly And The Family Stone
Higher!

SONY/LEGACY 2013 £6.84 (1CD), £26.79 (BOX SET)

You Say: "Fabulous comp goes deep with classics and gems from the vaults." ***Peter Garner, via e-mail***

Of several available 'best ofs', *Higher!* is the classiest and comes in two sizes. First, a 17-track digest with three unreleased songs (What's That Got To Do With Me, I Remember, and You're The One, taped live on Don Kirshner's Rock Show), plus singles edits, mono mixes and another live track from the Isle Of Wight (1971). If that merely whets your appetite rather than satisfying it, there's a fascinating 77-track 4-CD/8-LP box with 13 more previously unreleaseds, plus more of the other type extras. You'll be reminded why you dug Sly in the first place and, indeed, taken higher. Of other comps, *Spaced Cowboy* (2009, 2 discs) and *Dynamite!*, (2011, 22 songs) are Sony/Camden budget CDs.

LIFE
SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE

5 Sly And The Family Stone
Life

EPIC 1968 £3.98, DOWNLOAD £5.99

You Say: "Psychedelic highlight from the Family Stone's amazing early phase." ***Ruth Nathan, via e-mail***

Released in the slipstream of *Dance To The Music*, the Family Stone's third album is often overlooked in the story but has plenty of surprises and is a strong stepping stone (no pun etc) to *Stand!* Sure, opening track Dynamite! quotes from Dance and Plastic Jim reworks Eleanor Rigby's "all the lonely people" refrain rather baldly, but Chicken clucks and pecks its funk around the yard, while the contrasting grooves of Fun (fast) and Into My Own Thing (midtempo) show off the band's tight interplay. An exuberant M'Lady and title track, the album's two US Top 100 hits, are solid pathways from Dance To The Music to I Want To Take You Higher; Jane Is A Groupee is the caustic, cautionary closer.

FRESH
Sly and the Family Stone

3 Sly And The Family Stone
Fresh

EPIC 1973 £6.91, DOWNLOAD £5.99

You Say: "My initiation into the genius of Sly! It remains my favourite." ***Willman MusicMan, MOJO Facebook***

The Larry Graham/Greg Errico rhythm section had left in the fall-out from the heavy drug scene coalescing around Sly, and this broadly self-referential set of songs that followed is an honest portrait of the state he's in. "Put a little tickle on the jones's head/Turn off the light and go to bed," he sings in Frisky. There may be hope in Thankful 'N' Thoughtful, but a Doris Day cover, Que Sera, Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be), and If You Want Me To Say suggest Sylvester Stewart had his hat and coat on and was ready to turn off the studio lights after making this final essential LP. Richard Avedon's cover shot of Sly's energetic 'leap' is misleading. He was actually prone, laying down flat on a glass table. All the signs were there.

STAND!
SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE

2 Sly And The Family Stone
Stand!

EPIC 1969 £6.89, DOWNLOAD £5.89

You Say: "To a Californian teenager, it sounded as important as other local bands." ***John Ingham, MOJO Facebook***

The first five-star album in Sly's briefly productive, starkly parabolic career. Highlighted by its anthemic hits which emphasise the multiracial, men-women nature of the band – the drive of I Want To Take You Higher, the Number 1 hit Everyday People, Sing A Simple Song and the uprightly defiant title track – *Stand!* also boasted successful experimental tracks, notably two which lean on treated vocals – Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey, a fine funk workout, and the 13-minute Sex Machine, essentially a band instrumental.

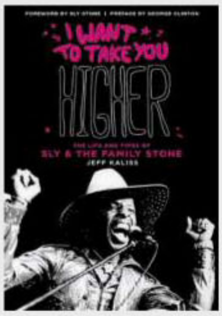
1 Sly And The Family Stone
There's A Riot Goin' On

EPIC 1971 £4.55, DOWNLOAD £3.99

You Say: "The proportion of masterpieces here is higher than on any other album." ***Francisco JP Madruga, MOJO Facebook***

Where have all the good times gone? Recorded during reclusive, obsessive and drug-fuelled sessions in a Bel Air mansion, Sly's riposte to his own hi-energy successes – *Stand!*, Woodstock triumph, Number 1 hit Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf) – was this masterpiece. It has some of his catchiest melodies (Family Affair, Just Like A Baby, Runnin' Away), but muddier, grittier rhythm tracks bubble on a mesh of guitar-bass-keyboards-synths under which lurks muted anger (Africa Talks To You), defiance (Brave & Strong) and drug paranoia ((You Caught Me) Smilin'). "I'm a songwriter, a poet," he sings in Poet, not a spokesman for a nation's generation despite a Stars And Stripes cover.

NOW DIG THIS


I WANT TO TAKE YOU HIGHER
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
JEFF KALISS

He's reclusive and not at all communicative but that hasn't deterred writers from tackling his life. Joel Selvin's Oral History (1999) was a brave start; Eddie Santiago's The Lives Of Sylvester Stewart & Sly Stone tussled gamely with its subject; but Jeff Kallis's I Want To Take You Higher (2008) had new face to face interviews with Sly and, indeed, a foreword from the star himself ("I like the way Jeff tells my story," Sly reveals, worryingly). Since then, Willem Alkema documented his search for the star for a DVD Coming Back For More (see MOJO 196, March 2010), and an album sized coffee table tome by Arno & Edwin Konings, The Story Of Sly & The Family Stone, ranged back to the gospel Stewart Four (1952) and forward to Family Stoners solo projects.

Willie Nelson, counterculture country music outlaw, and armadillo friend.

Rex

Crazy

The story behind the perfect voice of imperfect man.

By Michael Simmons.

It's A Long Story: My Life

★★★★

Willie Nelson with David Ritz

LITTLE, BROWN. £19

"Chet saw me as an outsider writing outsider songs and singing in an outsider style," recalls Willie Nelson of Chet Atkins in the 1960s. Willie had written hits (Crazy by Patsy Cline, Hello Walls by Faron Young), but his recording career saw little commercial success. Like other executives, RCA's Atkins insisted on drowning Nelson's mixes in vocal choruses and strings. By the early 1970s, Willie had turned 40 and decided to stick to his creative six-shooters. He's now recognised as one of the great American popular singers of all time.

Nelson's integrity and non-conformism are at the heart of his story, recounted here by the troublemaker and co-author David Ritz. Born in a map-speck called Abbott, Texas in 1933 and brought up by his grandparents, his unorthodox folks chased dreams elsewhere. Grandmother 'Mama' Nelson raised him with a rigorous religious education later made manifest in his lifelong spiritual practice. These dual mindsets built a framework where at age 82, Nelson continues to be driven by experimentation, wanderlust and an open mind while protected by a powerful faith.

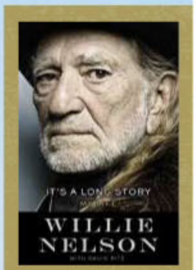
Texas is often portrayed as a whitebread wasteland when in truth the state is a multicultural stew. Willie absorbed the music of his fellow Texans: black country-blues, Mexican mariachi and Czech polkas. There was gospel and hillbilly and radio broadcast pop and jazz. Sinatra was his favourite singer and he recognised the similarities between Louis Armstrong and his beloved Bob Wills And His Texas Playboys. "There was the syncopation of jazz," he notes, comparing Wills – The King Of Western Swing – to black jazz giants. "The part that got folks to dancing."

> **"MASTERPIECES ARE DEFINED BY RESULTS, NOT RULES." Willie Nelson**

He got a guitar and began songwriting at the age of seven – the same year his grandfather died – "my introduction to suffering loss". Once grown-up and married with kids, he became a roaming troubadour in search of club gigs while selling encyclopaedias by day. Landing in Nashville, he became Ray Price's bassist and started selling his compositions that were inspired by his innate empathy. On the creation of Crazy, he describes an imaginary Everyman: "I can't get this man off my mind. His blues are my blues. He's crazy, and so am I."

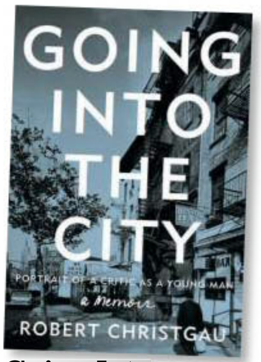
By the early '70s, he was making records as raw as the emotion in his songs and – beguiled by the freedom of the counterculture – he began "turning into the person I was". He grew his hair, wore jeans on-stage and – crucially – moved back to Texas where he became the hero of redneck and headneck alike, bridging a gap that had been torn asunder by civil rights and Vietnam.

Contradicting the negative forecasts of Columbia Records honchos, his concept album *Red Headed Stranger* went to Number 1 on the 1975 country charts and crossed over. He's stayed in forward gear, coolly navigating bumps and rarely looking back – except to share what he's learned in this deeply soulful memoir. Side trips into golf games, grass smokin' and movie roles are big fun, but it's his never-wavering trust in his instincts that lights the path: "Masterpieces are defined by results, not rules."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- When he was 14, Willie promoted a show by Bob Wills And His Texas Playboys. He made enough money to pay Wills, but earned nothing for himself except a lesson in professionalism from a legend.
- While his home in Nashville burned down in 1970, he braved the flames to rescue two guitar cases: one with his guitar, the other with "two pounds of primo Colombian pot".
- The long-time rumour is true: while visiting President Jimmy Carter in 1977, Willie smoked a joint with an "insider" on the roof of The White House.
- When he shared a bill with Frank Sinatra in Las Vegas, he told hotel boss Steve Wynn that Sinatra was his favourite singer. Willie recalls: "Introduced to Frank before the show, I was surprised when he said, 'You're my favourite singer, Willie.'"



Going Into The City

★★★★

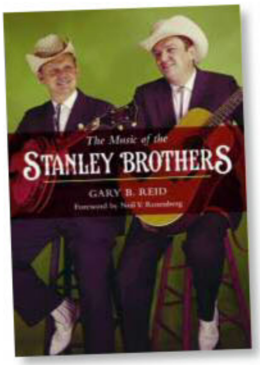
Robert Christgau

DEY STREET. £18.99

Engrossing memoir from the pioneering US music writer.

If all you've heard about this memoir from the self-proclaimed Dean of American Rock Critics is that it offers way too many details about Robert Christgau's sex life, don't let it scare you. Yes, that's here, but this is no 50 Shades of anything. More importantly, Christgau, who virtually invented the type of capsule record review and grading system still used by MOJO and countless other publications today, was, beginning in the late '60s – and remains – an insightful, articulate, often provocative analyser of music. Readers might not always agree with him, half the time they didn't even understand him, but they consulted him religiously before purchasing a record. As Christgau's own story unfolds here, so too do other engrossing tales: the advent of hippy-rock and punk, funk and hip hop, and that of Christgau's beloved New York, the only place that could possibly have bred him.

Jeff Tamarkin



The Music Of The Stanley Brothers

★★★★

Gary B. Reid

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS. £21.99

Excellent guide to the music of the duo who first defined the bluegrass genre.

Say hello to the Boyhood of bluegrass music journalism, a book that has taken Gary Reid some 40 years to piece together. The Stanley Brothers, Carter and Ralph, helped create the genre, a duo whose influence, along with that of the Louvins, would ultimately shape the sound of The Everly Brothers. Reid has set himself the task of detailing every aspect of their labyrinthine recordings and developing sound from 1947, when they first recorded for the minor Rich-R-Tone label, in Richmond, Virginia, through to the years with King and Mercury and their last full concert, at the Brown County Jamboree, Indiana, in October 1966, followed by Carter's death shortly after. Those seeking a deeper insight into the more personal aspects of the Stanleys' lives may need to look elsewhere but as an all-encompassing guide to their music, this is indispensable.

Fred Dellar

Lee, Myself & I

★★★

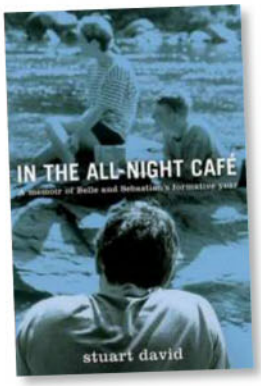
Wyndham Wallace

JAWBONE. £14.95

Managerial memoir of Lee Hazlewood's comeback years.

The author of These Boots… has remained an enigmatic figure since his passing in '07, but here's a welcome inside-track portrait from the guy who corralled his affairs from '99 onwards. While it would be unfair to say the book's title gives an accurate content breakdown (ie, only a third about Hazlewood), this is certainly not a proper biography, rather a personal account of how 'Indie Wyndy' of '90s alt-London became bezzie mates with a legend. Twixt biz-details of the ornery Oklahoman's comeback, an intimate picture emerges: indeed, as Wallace rolls a joint in a hotel room, a drunken Lee's penis swings inches from his head. In short: fearsome when angry, but a softie with family. Fabulous info is on drip-feed: the "sh-sh-sh" on Nancy Sinatra's Sugartown reflected young Barton Hazlewood's stammer; his dinner with Nancy and Barbara Stanwyck; his dealings with poppa Frank, plus Björn Borg and Duane Eddy. Conclusion: "Lee's refusal to compromise was sometimes painful, but always something to admire."

Andrew Perry



Stuart David

★★★★

In The All Night Café

LITTLE, BROWN. £16.99

Belle & Sebastian: at first there were cagoules.

Almost 20 years on from the release of debut album *Tigermilk*, there's an argument that says Belle & Sebastian haven't been *that* band for the last 14, since perhaps the exit of bassist and founder member Stuart David in 2000. These days, David makes deeply maudlin lo-fi techno with Looper; it's interesting to think what he might have made of the synthetic chirp of 2004 single I'm A Cuckoo. For the time being, however, readers will have to make do with the author's memories of Belle & Sebastian's first year; starting with a dusty return-to-work course in his hometown of Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire, and ending with the triumphant *Tigermilk* launch party at Stow College, Glasgow. As origin stories go it's hardly Batman Begins, yet as well as being a breezy document of how Britain's last truly great indie pop band came to be, it's also a nigh on perfect manifesto for DIY, outsider culture.

James McMahon

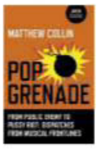
Pop Grenade: From Public Enemy To Pussy Riot – Dispatches From Musical Front-Lines

★★★

Matthew Collin

ZERO BOOKS. £12.99

At last, Berlin techno has its Kate Adie.



The urgent BBC foreign correspondent journalese of Collin's introduction makes a welcome change from the nostalgic "Weren't the '60s/punk rock/rave culture great?" tone which tends to prevail in 21st century discussion of pop's potential as an instigator of – as well as a soundtrack to – political transformation. So it is a shame this momentum dissipates slightly during an overlong first chapter on Public Enemy. But Collin's fascinating in-depth study of the commercialisation of Berlin's Love Parade finds him regaining the sure narrative stride that made his history of acid house – Altered State – stand out from the crowd. And as subsequent chapters whisk you from the "disco approach to conflict resolution" of a bizarre Boney M gig in war-torn South Ossetia through the lost freedoms of the Turkish rock scene, Pop Grenade offers a more nuanced and thoughtful perspective than its title might lead you to expect.

Ben Thompson

See Hear Yoko

★★★★

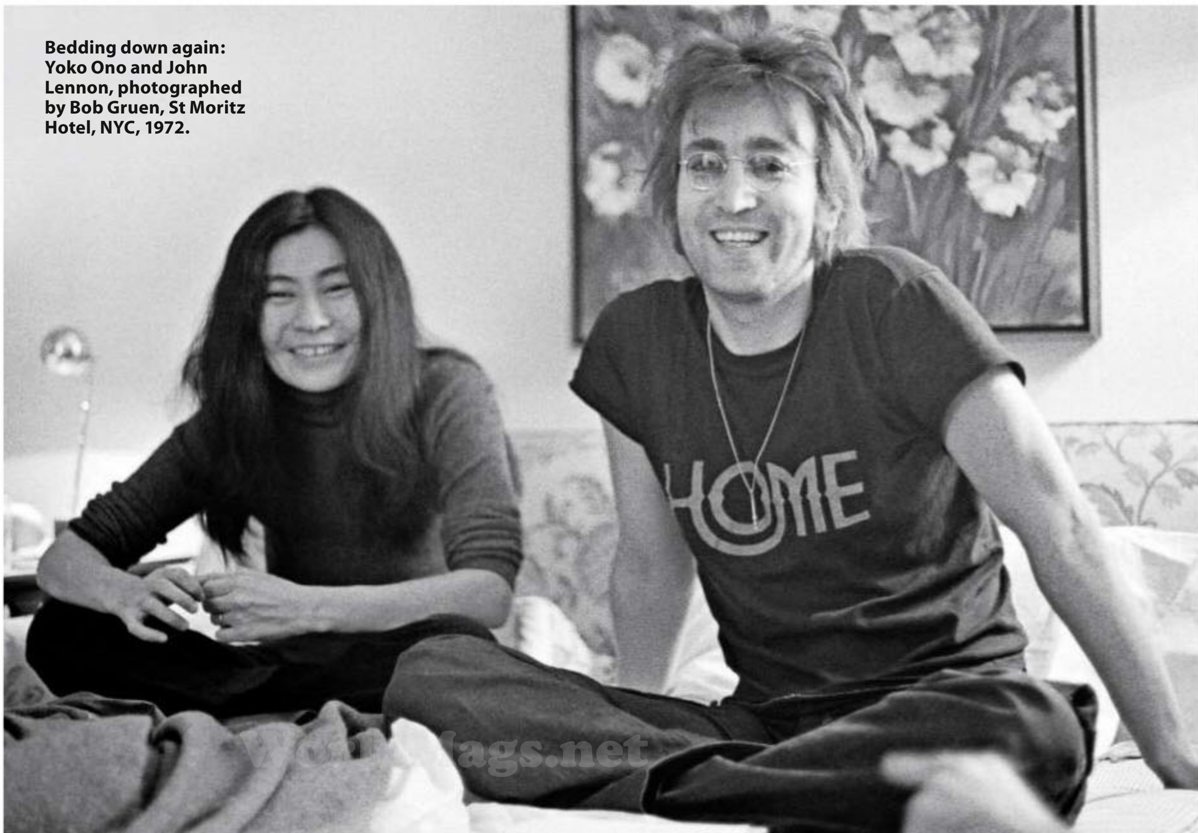
Bob Gruen And Jody Denberg

HARPER COLLINS. £19.99

An intimate portrait of the artist spanning 1971 to 2012.

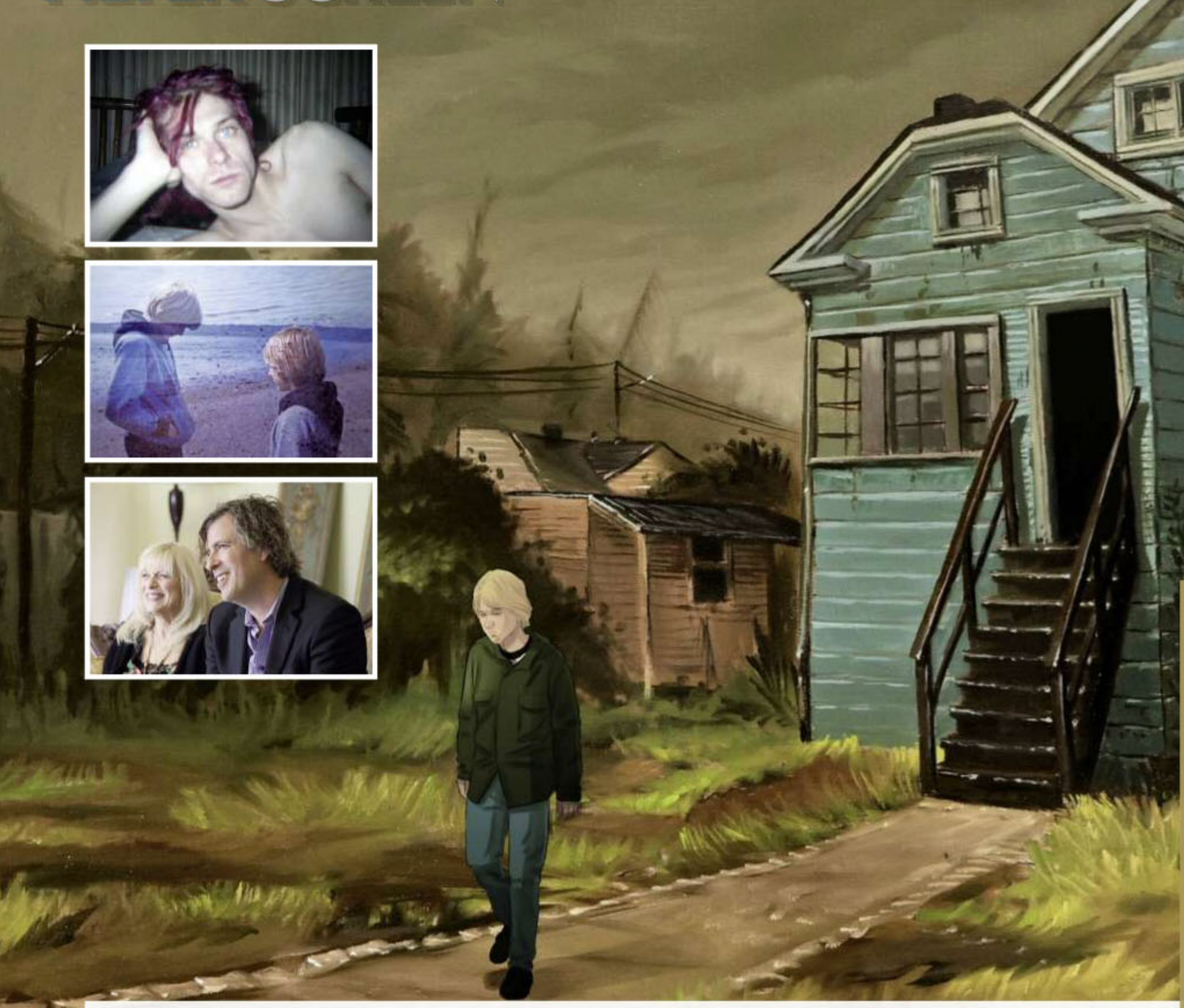
"I think that I'm in touch with my emotions and that's why I can bring them out," Yoko Ono told interviewer Jody Denberg in this hardback coffee table book which began life as an 80th birthday present for the artist and is now published at her request. Perhaps that's why she works so well with Bob Gruen, who served as personal photographer to her and John Lennon from 1972, documenting their partnership in New York, then Yoko's life until now. For Gruen knows how to capture that emotion. It's there in his pictures of John and Yoko at rehearsals in 1971, their adoration and respect for one another for all to see; of Yoko with son Sean, just after John's death in '82, the pain of loss palpable; of her dancing 30 years later, happy, liberated. Both testimony and visually defining, the impact on the reader is immense.

Lois Wilson



Bedding down again: Yoko Ono and John Lennon, photographed by Bob Gruen, St Moritz Hotel, NYC, 1972.

©Bob Gruen/www.bobgruen.com



Meet the family: animated Kurt leaves the house; (insets, from top) unseen shot of Cobain, circa '92; Kurt aged 13; mother Wendy and director Brett Morgan.

South of Heaven

Tortuous life of Nirvana's doomed leader, as told by relatives, and his audio-visual legacy. By Andrew Perry.

Cobain: Montage Of Heck

★★★★

Dir Brett Morgen,

UNIVERSAL. C/DVD/BLU-RAY.

At the outset of this foreseeably harrowing movie, Kim Cobain, sister-of, reveals how initially she felt inferior to her hyperactive elder bro. Then, amid eerie footage of a peroxide-wigged Kurt being wheelchaired on-stage at Reading '92, she concedes that she eventually realised, "I'm so glad I never got that genius brain."

Cobain's story has been told myriad times, but Montage Of Heck is especially near-the-knuckle, presenting it from his family's perspective – mother Wendy, father Don, stepmother Jennifer and widow Courtney Love – with the aid of disarmingly private home movies, plus Kurt's own audio tapes, notebooks, and artwork, which are brought to life via quite astonishing animation.

Parental testimony is highly persuasive in chronicling what an impossible child Kurt was to bring up. Ever-buzzing, prescribed Ritalin, he looks cute in their Super 8's, but after Wendy and Don's divorce, mum simply couldn't handle him on her own, and the nine-year-old human hand-grenade was palmed off on Dad and other relatives, leaving him with bedrock feelings of rejection and anger.

Animated scribbling and his own taped narration brilliantly evoke teenage Kurt's disaffection, and salvation by punk rock. The familiar yarn of Nirvana's formation and subsequent career progress is dealt with sketchily, only as it affects Kurt's inner turmoil. Though Krist Novoselic alone speaks for Nirvana, animated Cobain lyric sheets crisply penetrate Kurt's rage. His first girlfriend, Tracy Marander, talks of his stomach pains: though they cohabited, she knew nothing of his first heroin dabbling.

Through Nirvana's meteoric ascent, the 'real Kurt' seems to slip from our grasp – much as he did, doubtless, for those close to him at the time – but with Ms Love's arrival, Montage Of Heck takes a sudden turn for the lurid, revealing and erotically charged. A protracted tongue kiss fills the screen for a seeming eternity – filmed by an excitable Kurt. For Courtney, forever cast as the parasite glommed onto his talent, such scenes are there to show how in love they were.

Initially at least, Kurt is perma-grinning, truly alive before your eyes.

Though camcorder footage shows their apartment to resemble the most chaotic of welfare housing, their life together appears mad, but happy.

"Our combined fusion bends spoons," Kurt writes, "I'd abort Christ for you."

"We wanted a baby, we were all we had," she says, adding that they'd have definitely had more kids if Cobain had lived long enough.

Revelations of Courtney's 'heroin pregnancy' in Vanity Fair capsize their crazy Eden. Out of consideration for daughter Frances Bean, her placing in mum Wendy's care soon after birth is only passingly mentioned.

Instead, we see Kurt, the doting father: "I might stop the rock'n'roll thing, because I don't want her to get screwed up because of it," he says, very measured, but soon cradles her, scabby and nodding out.

Wendy remembers confronting him about his addiction: "He burst into tears," she says, "he was so ashamed."

His suicide comes in stark white-on-black type, without hand-wringing or post mortems. It has been a compelling psychological profile of an extraordinary artist – a real rollercoaster, imaginatively constructed, uplifting in its truthfulness.

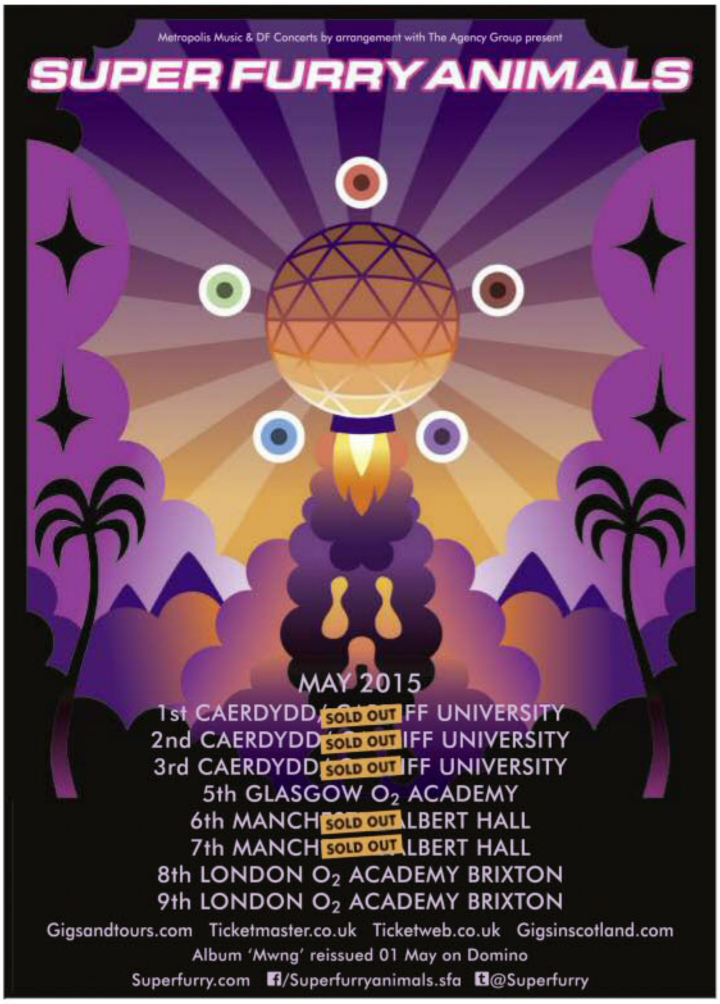
> "WITH MS LOVE'S ARRIVAL, THINGS TAKE A TURN FOR THE LURID, REVEALING AND EROTICALLY CHARGED."

BRETT MORGEN
kurt cobain
MONTAGE OF HECK
HBO

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- ● According to Kurt's audiotapes, he first attempted suicide after losing his virginity, aged 14. He tied himself to a train track, but the oncoming locomotive screamed past on parallel rails.
- ● On hearing *Nevermind*, mother Wendy told Kurt, "You'd better buckle up, you're not ready for what's coming."
- ● Kurt's Rohypnol overdose in Rome in March '94 was, says Courtney, his response to her considering a potential infidelity with an unnamed male suitor.

METROPOLIS MUSIC PRESENTS



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Lord of the dance

Vernal equinox, partial solar eclipse, on this "special day" Nile Rodgers launched a new Chic single in a hit-rammed celebration. By Geoff Brown.

Chic featuring Nile Rodgers

Roundhouse, London

The portents could have been kinder to astronomy devotee Nile Rodgers. Having chosen to launch his band's first single in a couple of decades on the occasion of vernal equinox in London, home to the Greenwich meridian, the partial eclipse of the sun, which he and much of the rest of the capital had been hoping to view at about 9.30 on the morning of Friday, March 20, was obliterated by cloud cover typical of the Smoke.

But Rodgers is not a man easily deflected, and especially not by a bit of grey nimbostratus. "This is a very special day for me," the guitarist/songwriter/producer said, alone on-stage, before the start of his band's set, "the launch of Chic's first single in something like 20 years."

Diagnosed with an aggressive prostate cancer in 2010, after his operation he decided to make as much music as he could in the time left to him and has been as good as his word, working, famously, with Daft Punk, and with Avicii and others, and curating an ever-lengthening list of reissues of his classic soul-disco-pop productions with the late Bernard Edwards which began back in 1977. He has also been touring a good bit.

That partnership loomed large throughout the hit-rammed 23-song set. In fact, he explained, Chic's new single had been inspired by Nile's memory of the night of his best friend's death after a gig in Tokyo, when staff at the hotel they were staying in called him to Edwards' room. "I shook him and I could feel he was cold, rigor mortis had set in, I could tell he was gone. I said, I'll be there for you in death the way you were there for me in life." Then a video promoting I'll Be There – a new creation full of prime Chic grooves and riffs and referencing past hits, notably Everybody Dance – filled the screened at the back of the stage and Nile stood to one side, gazing at the screen, air-guitaring his distinctive rhythm passages.

And after that, the fun began in earnest, a whirl of most of the finest soul-disco-rock-pop tunes ever recorded, played by a band that knows its way around the Chic terrain.

I Want Your Love, the third song in, provides the first indication that in Kimberly Davis, Rodgers has discovered a treasure, a young woman with a big and expressive voice. Her work on the new album, due June 2, should be something. Davis shares vocal duties with Folami, a softer-edged vocalist who sings the Diana Ross hits (Upside Down, I'm Coming Out). Of the Sister Sledge material, We Are Family draws the biggest response from the roiling mass of dancers on the floor. If this evening's version of He's The Greatest Dancer wasn't, well, the greatest, Edwards/Rodgers' 1982 film theme Soup For One, somewhat peripheral in the Chic pantheon, succeeds, while Lost In Music spoke to explorers seeking the land of the good groove.

Introducing Spacer, Chic's 1979 hit for Sheila & B. Devotion, Rodgers suggested we "sing it loud and proud, as Luther Vandross would recommend", alluding to the then New York session singer who corralled his coterie of strong, if unknown, vocalists to Chic's aid in 1976 for the very first single, Everybody Dance.Rodgers lays out a lovely guitar intro for Thinking Of You and solos sharply in Happy Man, a rare Nile lead vocal that segues smoothly into My Feet Keep Dancing, as does Get Lucky into Chic Cheer.

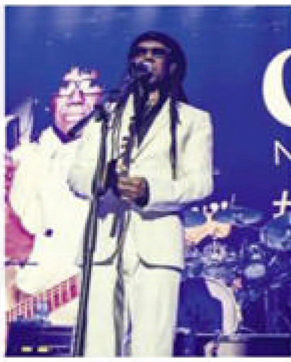
Criticisms are few: in flusher times the band carried a small string section and replacing those parts with a synthesizer creates harsher lines; versions of songs written or produced for others – Why (Carly Simon); Notorious (Duran Duran); David Bowie's Let's Dance, sung by drummer Ralph Rolle; Madonna's Like A Virgin – pale next to the Chic-Sister Sledge-Diana Ross hits.

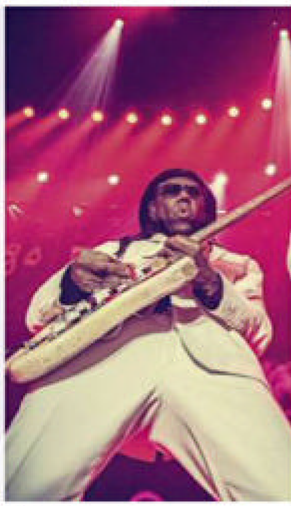
The performance was familiar to anyone who's seen Chic in the past couple of years, a set cemented in the consciousness by their Glastonbury 2013 triumph, right down to the carefully managed 'stage invasion' by members of the audience during closer Good Times, which comes complete with an insert from Rapper's Delight, the 1979 hit that committed grand theft of the Chic original. The only songs lacking were Nile's best guitar piece, Savoir Faire, and Norma Jean's Friday night essential, Saturday.

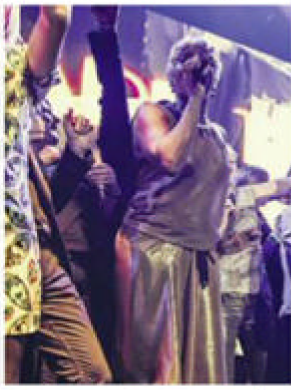
But that was wonderfully offset by the band performing, after only three run-throughs, Rodgers said, I'll Be There. "Don't lose this," Pops Staples had instructed his daughter Mavis after she's played him tracks that would become his posthumous album, *Don't Lose This*. The echo in Nile's pledge to his bassist-friend Edwards, "I'll be there", is touching and persuasive. As the band left and the crowd thinned out, the I'll Be There video played again and Rodgers, at the end of "one of the most important nights of my life", watched it with us again, dancing to his own tune, as ever.

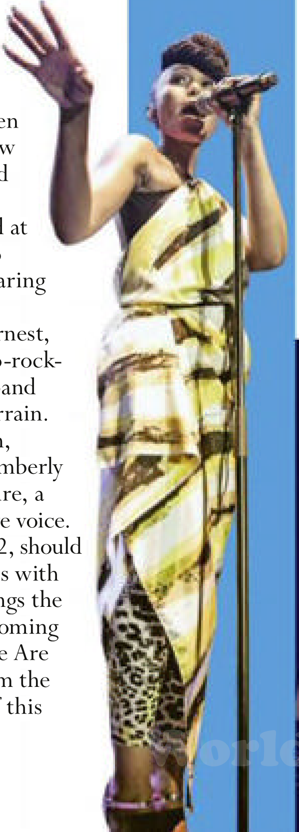
Being there: (main image, far right) masterful guitarist Nile Rodgers fronts his "South Bronx White Suit Band"; (right, from top) Kimberly Davis gives Nile some advice; Rodgers introduces the I'll Be There video; they're the greatest dance band, with bassist Jerry Barnes; Good Times; Kimberly feels the love; the Diana Ross segment; (inset below) Folami.

> "ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NIGHTS OF MY LIFE."
> Nile Rodgers









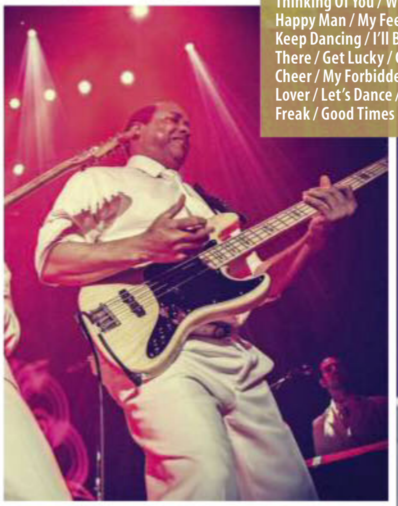
UPSIDE DOWN

Carsten Windhorst (8)

CHIC
NILE RODGERS
#illbethe

SETLIST

Everybody Dance / Dance, Dance Dance / I Want Your Love / I'm Coming Out / Upside Down / He's The Greatest Dancer / We Are Family / Soup For One / Like A Virgin / Lost In Music / Notorious / Spacer / Thinking Of You / Why / Happy Man / My Feet Keep Dancing / I'll Be There / Get Lucky / Chic Cheer / My Forbidden Lover / Let's Dance / Le Freak / Good Times



CHIC
RODGERS
Fender - DeVille

Dutch courage

Giddy rock'n'roll thrills and bewitching, bluesy torch songs as Benjamin Booker spreads his considerable New Orleans charm. By Stevie Chick.

Benjamin Booker

Paradiso Noord, Amsterdam

Breathless, with a smile as wide as Saturn's rings and enough Big Easy charm to make fellow New Orleanian Harry Connick Jr seem like GG Allin, Benjamin Booker addresses his audience.

"Amsterdam, this is an old folk song from the United States of America," he says, introducing Li'l Liza Jane, the century-old standard that's previously appeared in the repertoire of Nina Simone, David Bowie and The Band. "There are literally only three words in the chorus," he grins, "so if you don't sing along we are going to pack up our gear and go home right now."

Gauntlet firmly thrown down, Booker and his band, a skeletal crew numbering mustachioed bassist Alex Spoto and bearded drummer Max Norton – both of whom seem to have been recruited from a San Francisco jug band circa 1968 – lay into the song, a ride as rickety and thrilling as a brakes-less, shocks-free jalopy hurtling down a steep hill. Norton hammers a rhythm that gallops like a runaway train and Spoto and Booker riff away, almost racing each other, careering off the beat as Booker's yowling holler bleeds into the night. It's bluesy as hell, punk as fuck, equal parts bluegrass lindy hop and seamy Sister Ray blitz. Amsterdam, it is fair to say, is having trouble keeping up with all this, but the trio thankfully have brought enough bonhomie to compensate for any shortfall.

Born in Virginia, raised in Florida and a New Orleans resident since graduating college a few years back, Booker juggles punk rock vim with bluesy roots. Anyone who's had their ears open during the past 15 years will know that's been a common combination since Jack White and his sister Meg proved it lucrative, but Booker's proprietary blend is genuinely fresh, different and unexpected (notoriously intolerant of copycats, White must approve of Booker's sound, having taken him on tour and released his live album on Third Man).

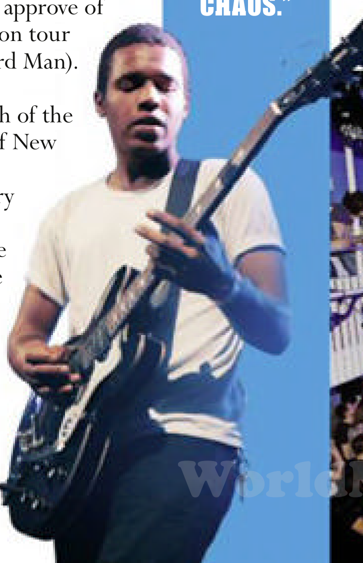
Much of Booker's debut album relocates the choppy Big Apple rush of the first Strokes album to the streets of New Orleans, awash with the restless playfulness of zydeco, the dark glory of the blues. Songs like Violent Shiver and Wicked Waters send the audience gonzo tonight, irresistible fizzing rushes of electric guitar chug that ever threaten to vacate the rails and collapse into chaos, wearing this gleeful carelessness like a grin, a daredevil's swagger. These songs possess itchy and impossibly catchy riffs, picaresque tales harbouring sudden tempo changes; they're woozy, anthemic, and rage wildly when in full-flight.

Between those crowd-pleasers, Booker drops the tempo and sets his torch songs burning. And they're remarkable, every bit as on-the-edge-of-collapse as the punk rock chuggers, but hitting deeper. For Slow Coming, Booker switches down to a Tom Waitsian growl, wounded and soulful over the song's sweltering Southern crawl, locating a profound ache within the refrain of "the future is slow coming". His piercing, feedback-drowned guitar breaks leave the trad bluesers in the room confused, but suit the song's downbeat glide perfectly. A cover of Furry Lewis's Falling Down Blues is magical, Norton swapping his sticks for mandolin and Spoto breaking out a violin, while Booker squeezes his eyes shut, claps his hands and weaves about the stage, lost in the moment, barking and howling in the spaces between the instruments.

There's nothing polite or predictable about Booker's music tonight, from his self-penned barnburners, to a devilish cover of Otis Redding's Shout Bamalama (after which Benjamin downs a well-deserved pint of beer in a single gulp), to set-closer By The Evening, as profane and passionate as The Pogues in full romantic flight.

Following that song's close, the sweat-soaked trio inch off stage and don't return, half the Paradiso crowd lingering for an encore that doesn't come. It's not the only time Booker wrong-foots his audience tonight: you sense confusion whenever he swaps from street-walking rockers to his more muted, intense tunes, whenever he swings his guitar towards the amps and revels in the feedback that bleeds out.

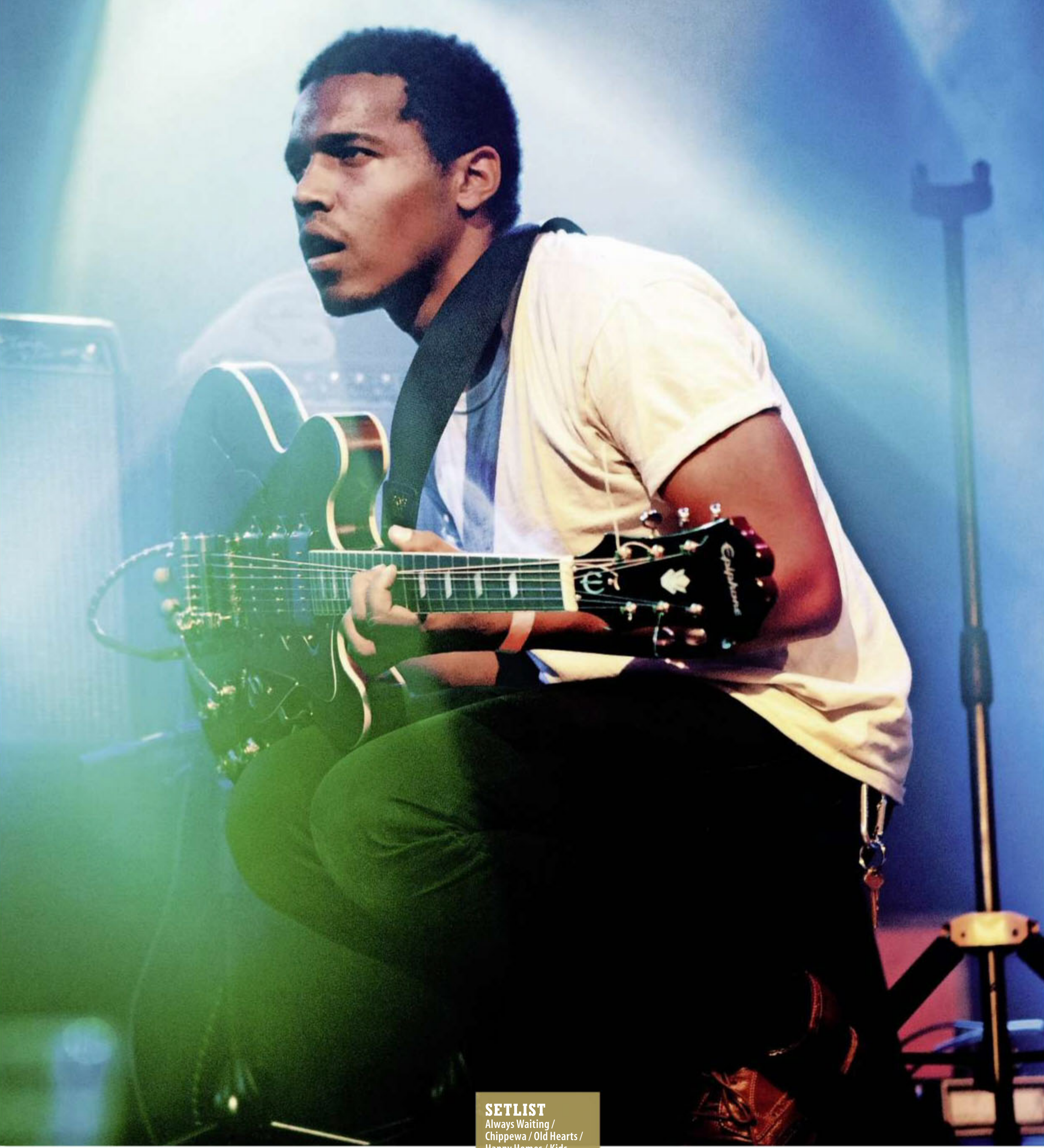
He risks losing them – or at least the less open-minded of his audience – for the same reason brilliance lies clearly within his grasp: because he's remarkable, an original. Colouring within the lines isn't an option for Booker, and if there's a tightrope nearby, then he's definitely going to walk it. And that's why, at its best, his music is so loose, so lyrical and so very much alive. Some won't get it, but those who do will love it to death.



Down-in-one blues: Benjamin Booker in Amsterdam (right) harvesting feedback; (bottom row, from right) drummer Max Norton; Alex Spoto, bass; the Paradiso Noord; Booker juggling punk vim and blues roots.

"FIZZING RUSHES OF ELECTRIC GUITAR CHUG THAT THREATEN TO VACATE THE RAILS AND COLLAPSE INTO CHAOS."

Simon Fernandez (5)



SETLIST
Always Waiting / Chippewa / Old Hearts / Happy Homes / Kids Never Growing Older / Falling Down Blues / Slow Coming / Li'l Liza Jane / Shout Bamalama / Spoon Out My Eyeballs / Wicked Waters / Violent Shiver / Have You Seen My Son / By The Evening

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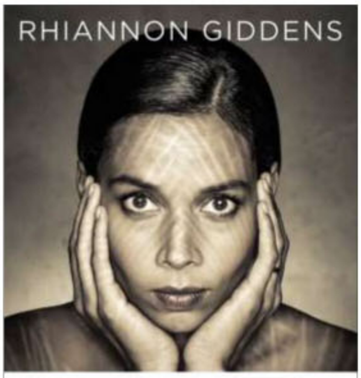

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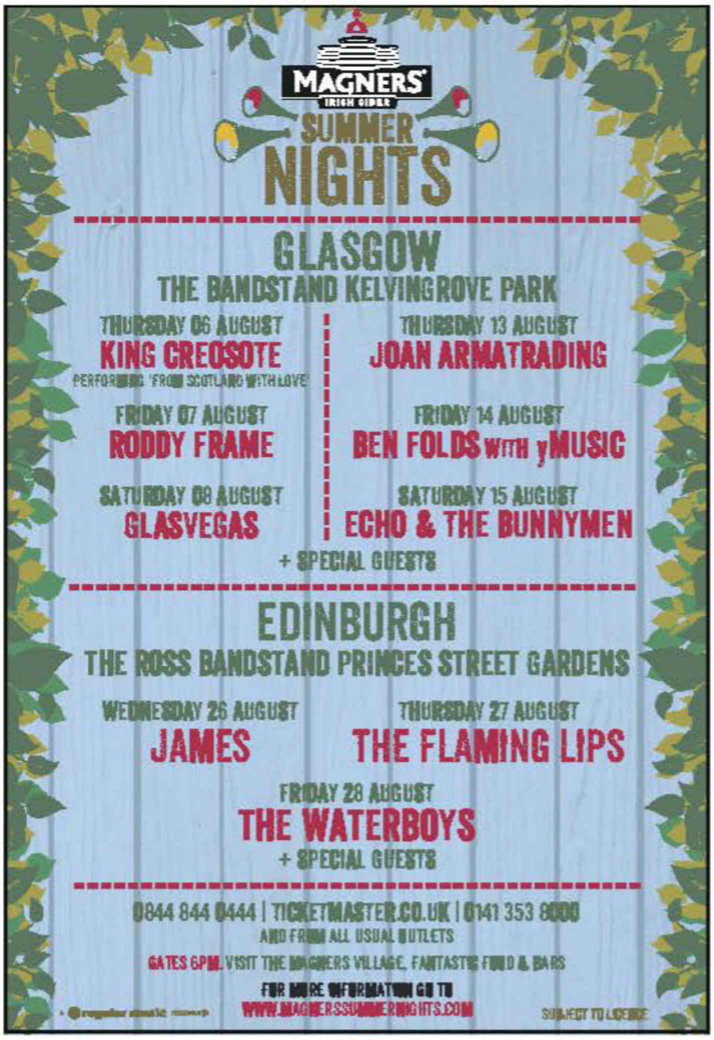

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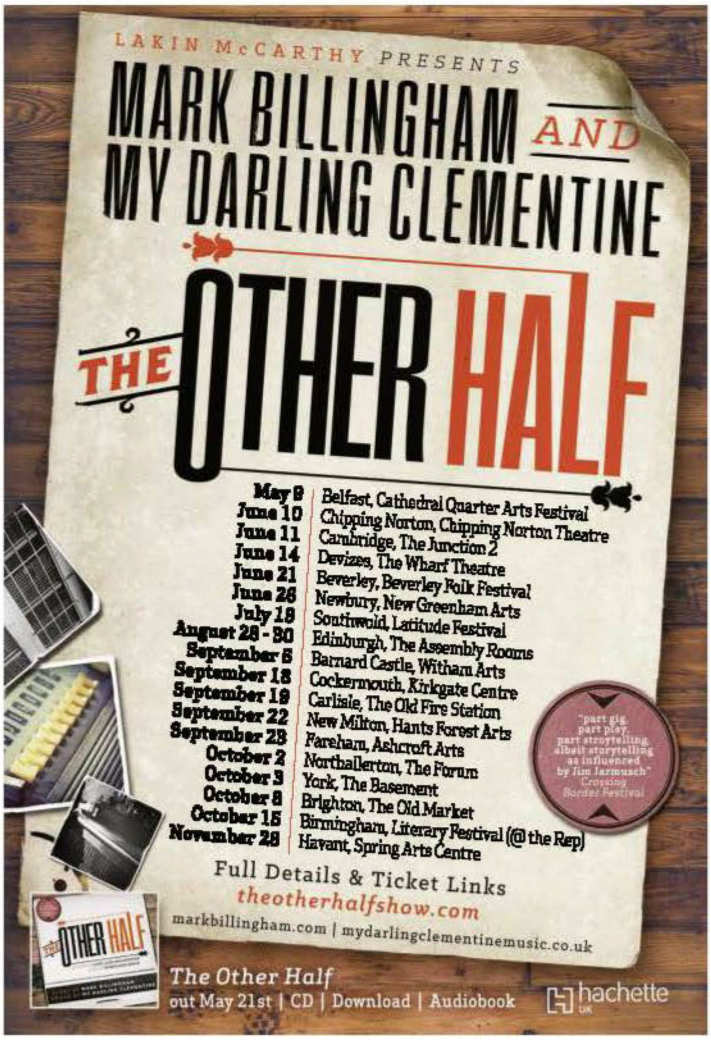

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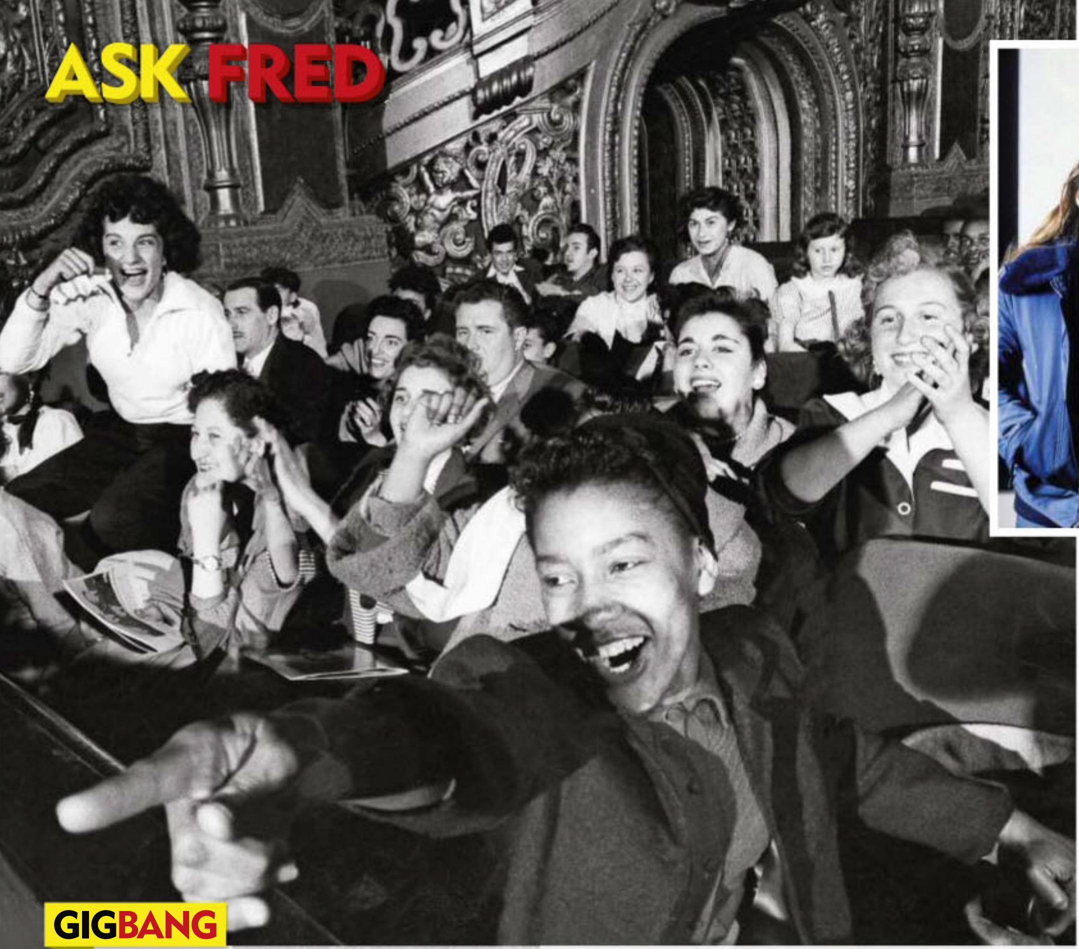


GIGBANG

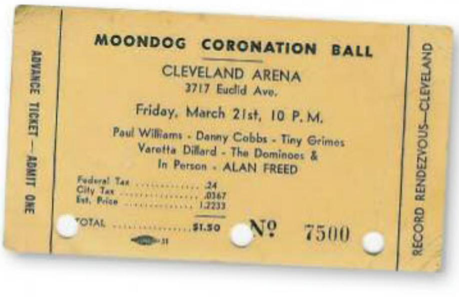
WHEN DID ROCK CONCERTS BEGIN?

Have you dwelt ever in realms apart from the visible world? Then dig R&B rioting, Floyd/Marvin Gaye mash-ups and Carry On-jazz.

Where and when was the first rock concert held? I mean the kind involving several bands and singers, the sort that preceded Woodstock etc.

T. Kerr, Portsmouth

Fred says: It's generally agreed that the first all-star shindig was Alan Freed's Moondog Coronation Ball, held at the Cleveland Arena on March 21, 1952. DJ Freed, together with promoter Lew Platt and local record store owner Leo Mintz, had lined-up Paul Williams And His Hucklebuckers as headliners, with Tiny Grimes And His Rockin' Highlanders, The Dominoes, Varetta Dillard and Danny Cobb in support. The hall held 9,500 and often housed around 8,000 on hockey nights. But, according to the Cleveland Press, 25,000 mainly black teenagers turned up at the gig and demanded entrance to hear their R&B favourites. Freed took to the stage, causing surprise among some in the audience when they realised he was white, and some of the acts attempted to perform. But the music was halted early as the hall became over crowded, knives began flashing and the police moved in. So, the first rock concert hardly even began, but as Cleveland DJ Bill Randle adjudged, "It was the first big show of its kind where the industry saw it as big business."



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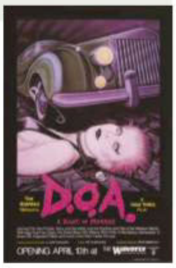
DID BARBARA WINDSOR MIX SAX WITH S-E-X?

My dad says Barbara Windsor was once a top-rate jazz singer. Is he having me on?

Kerry G, via e-mail

Fred says: A mild exaggeration, perhaps, but Babs was the singer with Ronnie Scott's Band for a while during the mid '50s. The story goes that she passed her audition ahead of several vocal rivals because she was the only one who didn't choose to sing The Lady Is A Tramp. According to Barbara, she came into the band as a replacement for Annie Ross and spent much of one tour ignoring knocks on her hotel bedroom door each night, though in the case of trumpet star Les Condon she rather regretted the fact that he acted like a perfect gentleman, as she rather fancied him. Barbara added that she found pianist Stan Tracey somewhat forbidding, but in a later Guardian interview revealed that she retained a friendship with Ronnie Scott, whom she once met outside a London West End sandwich bar. Ronnie, after offering her half a salt-beef sandwich, promptly took her up a rickety staircase to a dingy room. "The next thing I knew, we both had our clothes off," Barbara recalled, making no mention what- soever of his usual flow of terrible jokes.



Showtime! (clockwise, from top) '50s rockin' celebrants; Marvin and the Floyd (honest); jazzer Babs Windsor; D.O.A. poster.

IS THIS A MARVIN MASH?

What's the griff about the album Marvin Gaye was supposed to have made with Pink Floyd? Is there any semblance of truth in the story?

John Cunningham, via e-mail

Fred says: The tale goes that Gaye met the Floyd at an Earl's Court concert and they got together to record the album *Requiem For A Dream* on the Harvest Heritage label, but Motown pulled the plug on the project. The story is a load of rubbish, but the blogger who created it must be up for an International 'Paul Is Dead' award of the decade.

IDIOTIC REACTION!

Did anything result from the question (in MOJO 255) about Terry And The Idiots and the punk documentary film D.O.A.?

Robert Carey, Liverpool

Fred says: Musician, producer and studio boss, Malcolm Joseph, who headed 7th Heaven and has played with Massive Attack, Neneh Cherry and Grace Jones, contacted MOJO to say he was bassist with The Idiots when D.O.A. was filmed. "I was 15 and met Terry Sylvester through my old friend Gibbsy, who played guitar. The film's director was in a cab which was supposed to take him to the King's Road but somehow took him to Hackney's Kingsmead Estate, where he met Terry. Asked if there was a punk band in the area, Terry informed the director that he had a band playing at the Golden Shoe pub that night. Terry didn't have a band but we immediately formed The Idiots for the gig, got filmed and became an overnight sensation. We got drunk and only rehearsed just before we went on – one reason why the band seemed to be playing God Save The Queen when Terry's singing Anarchy In The UK! I haven't seen Terry or the others since but Gibbsy saw Terry about 15 years ago and he has his own plumbing business and a large family. As for the film, making it was a good vibe but we received nothing for it."

HELP FRED...

For years I've been trying to remember a song from a sketchy lyric. It was funky, probably British, from 1980-82, and included lines like "the Southern Freeze is not a cold day in Baltimore" and mentioning a sauna. The singer also intones "mirror, mirror on the wall" at one point. Any help and I owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

Steve Fernald, Seattle

Fred says: Could it be some remix of Freeez and Dollar? Any ideas?

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk

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The closing date is **June 2, 2015**.

For the rules of the quiz, send an SAE to that same address.

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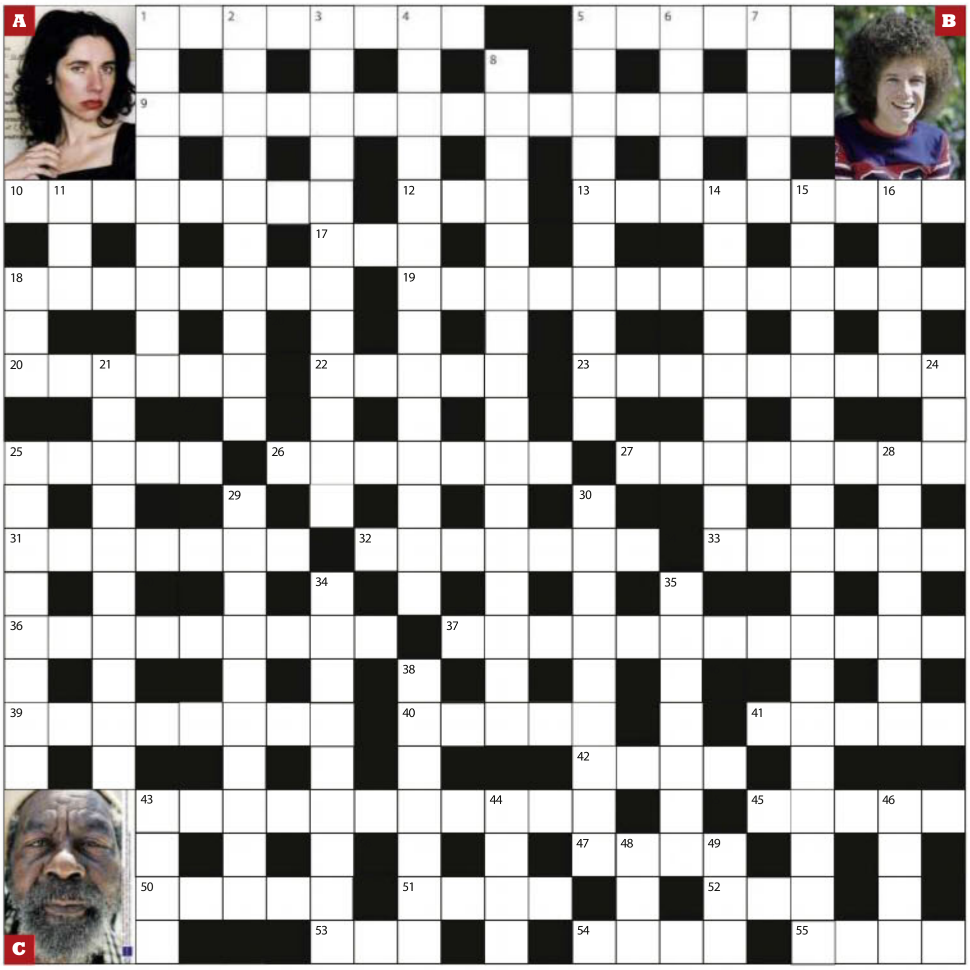
ANSWERS

MOJO 257

Across: 1 Bryan Ferry, 5 Amigo, 9 Leiber And Stoller, 11 Marilyn, 13 E Street Band, 17 Parva, 18 The Hives, 20 *Fragile*, 21 Keane, 22 *Full Circle*, 24 Tease Me, 25 Boston, 27/7 God's Great Banana Skin, 28 Soho, 29 Oklahoma, 32 Norman, 33 Lady, 34 Crazy, 35 Sulk, 36 Snafu, 38 I Need, 39 My Friend, 44 *Ocean*, 46 Stay, 47 *Bleach*, 48 Gilbert, 51 *Car Wheels On*, 52 *User*, 53 *Abraxas*, 54 Slow, 56 Usher, 58 *Goats*, 59 Regulate, 60 Stage, 61 Ether.

Down: 1 Billie Holiday, 2 Noel, 3 Erasure, 4 *Red Headed Stranger*, 6 Mel, 8 *Station*, 10 Ivy, 12 *Achtung Baby*, 14 E.M.F., 15 Alice, 16 *Diesel And Dust*, 17 *Psychocandy*, 19 *Vein*, 23 Ebony, 26 *Nonsuch*, 30 Ornette, 31 Octet, 37 Focus, 39 Marc, 40 *Fear*, 41 *Is This It*, 42 Nate Dogg, 43 Absolute, 45 Ali, 48 Grapes, 49 La Roux, 50 Rialto, 52 Use Me, 55 Woe, 57 S.S.T.

Winners: Gary Owens of Ashbourne, Derbys, **Pete Sargeant** of Fetcham, **Paul Jenkins** of St Agnes, Cornwall, **Robert Robinson** of Sunderland each win a Fender Sonoran SCE acoustic guitar.



Rex (2)

ACROSS

1 See photoclue A (1.1.6)
5 Bop like a Bon Jovi album (6)
9 Pursue Ann Knowles badly for a Joy Division offering (7,9)
10 See photoclue B (3,5)
12/25 down Sounds like a speedy one from Maxïmo Park (3,8)
13 His debut album was *The College Dropout* (5,4)
17 It was true for Elvis Costello (3)
18 Location for Geldof's Rats (8)
19 A Robbie Williams song with a hint of The Who (3,6,1,3)
20 Marsden or Taupin maybe (6)
22 Time of the morning for a Buddy Holly success (5)
23 Gil Scott-Heron song based on conversations with alcoholics (3,6)
25 He was placed in a tutu by The Smiths (5)
26 China Crisis were warped by it albumwise (7)
27 Brian Eno solo album that includes Juju Space Jazz (5,3)
31 Biopic in which Lou Diamond Phillips portrayed Ritchie Valens (2,5)
32 Nice --- ---- (Usher) (3,4)
33 Weapons required for Mozzer LP? (6)
36 Cerys Matthews & co. (9)
37 Keith Richards LP or Hives song (4,8)
39 Too Much --- ------ (The Specials) (3,5)
40 Sans clothes like Talking Heads LP (5)
41 Their albums included *Lawn Boy, Farmhouse* and *Fuego* (5)
42 See photoclue C (1-3)
43 Placed inside the goldmine by The Doors (5,6)
45 Film also known as Melody that featured songs by the Bee Gees, CSNY etc (1.1.1.1.1)
47 The T.Rex album that contained Born To Boogie (4)
50 Former Sugarcube Örn, regarded as the first punk in Iceland (5)
51 Award-winning Irish musical that featured Glen Hansard and The Frames (4)
52 With which Bowie manufactured his Machine (3)
53 Everly rather than Arden (3)
54 Everybody Dance, they said in 1977 (4)
55 In Too ---- (Genesis) (4)

DOWN

1 He wrote Ten Years for Oprah Winfrey (4,5)
2 Richard and Linda Thompson's ice cream song (5,5)
3 Were ZZ Top in the mire for this album? (3,6,3)
4 He provided the film score for The Untouchables (5,9)
5 Ram Jam's 1977 hit (5,5)
6 Movement for a Brian McKnight LP (1-4)
7 See 18 down
8 The Beautiful South's optical claim (3,3,4,2,4)
11 Elton hit hidden amid Ellie Goulding (3)
14 They went Over Under Sideways Down (9)
15 A Nick Heyward release or a Bryan Forbes film (7,4,3,4)
16 Indie punks Midway ----- (5)
18/7 down 4 Seasons songwriter-producer with Cheshire connection (3,5)
21 Robert Wyatt album produced by the Floyd's Nick Mason (4,6)
24 Jimmy --- World (3)
25 See 12 Across
28/46 down Lionel Richie and Diana Ross's ever-ongoing romance (7,4)
29 Forgiveness, as granted by Muse (10)
30 It was Mary Hansen's final album with Stereolab (5-4)
34 He's been Nice On The Ice and seen the Stamp Of A Vamp (3,6)
35 Jimmy Webb asked about his whereabouts (1.1.5)
38 ------ -- Wood (Eddie Floyd) (5,2)
43 Band formed by Mickey Melchiondo and Aaron Freeman (4)
44 Cave, Drake, Rhodes maybe? (4)
46 See 28 down
48 Their 1977 LP was released in '96 (3)
49 Swindon band that ceased touring in 1982 (1.1.1.)

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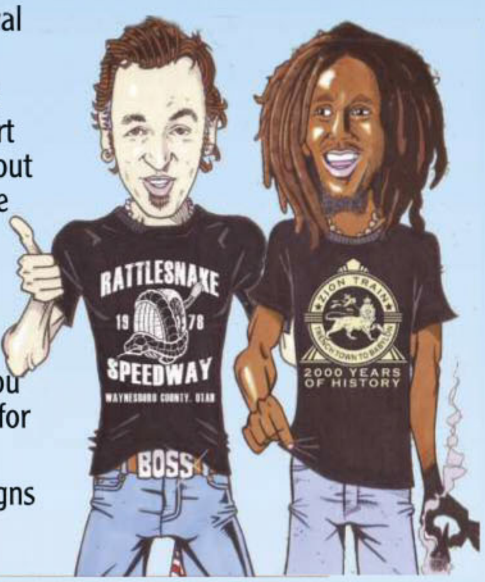

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THISMONTH

RANDY BACHMAN AND BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE

It began when country rock got heavy. But changing styles and dissent in the ranks forced the truck off the road.

HELLO MID 1972

I'd left The Guess Who after nine years in 1970, when American Woman was Number 1. I had to go to hospital: on the road I'd started having gall bladder problems and every night I'd be in the most horrific bathrooms, vomiting blood. It was like someone kicking you in the balls over and over for an hour.

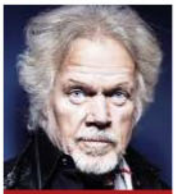
I went home to recuperate. Neil Young had come home [to Winnipeg] and played me his first solo album, which I thought was pretty amazing, so I said, "I wanna do country rock." I'd gone back to my old mate Chad Allen from The Guess Who, we came up with the name Brave Belt and Neil got me a deal with Warner Brothers, but the album sold nothing. We had to be a performing band, and I'd known Fred Turner since I was 14 or 15, he was playing with a polka band in Saskatchewan. He said he was in if he could write his own songs and sing them. I flew out to see Fred at the Empire Hotel in Regina and he sang his traditional song, House Of The Rising Sun, in this big Harley-Davidson motorcycle/dumptruck voice. "You're in!" So I played him a country song and we heavied it up.

[After *Brave Belt II*, 1972] we'd been passed on by 26 labels, but Charlie Fach of Mercury said, "You have a shot, but you have to have your name on the label." We were originally Bachman-Turner, but people thought we were a folk duo and we needed a heavy name.

There was this magazine, like Playboy for truckers, called Overdrive. I said to Fred, "This would be a great name for an album."

He said, "No, it would be a great name for the *band*." So we became Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

How d'ya like your Winnipegs in the morning: (above) Brave Belt, soon to be BTO (from left) Randy Bachman, Robbie Bachman and Fred Turner; (below right) BTO in Japan, October '76, with Randy (left) and Blair Thornton; Randy now (below).



"I SAID, 'THIS IS MY BUS AND I'M DRIVING IT. NO DRINKING, NO SMOKING, NO CHICKS.'"

Getty Images, Atlas Icons, Calliane Bachman

I was producing and financing the band, and I said to them, "This is my bus and I'm driving it. I'll put you on a salary. This is business. No drinking, no smoking, no chicks."

We did three years on the road, 300 dates a year, 90 days on and a week off, and on the week off we'd record a bloody album. It was bam, bam, bam, and soon we were on top of the world.

GOODBYE EARLY 1977

When we did our tour of Japan in 1976, it was wonderful but I could sense it was the end. Everybody was splintering and guys were not on time in the morning because they had hangovers. When everybody had started getting their cheques it was, screw the curfew and the drinking thing, screw Randy's rules.

It came to a head when we sat down in our manager Bruce Allen's office after we'd done the *Freeways* album. I would traditionally mix [the albums] and when we listened to it, the rest of the band said, "Some of it's good, some of it isn't."

I'd been trying stuff – disco was in, strings were in – and Fred said, "I think we need to do our thing and you need to do a solo album." It was time for me to leave, so I said, fine, great, and like an idiot I gave them the name BTO.

Bands are destined to break up, though. It's in their DNA. I'm still pissed off that The Beatles broke up, but you're in this nucleus for years and you are destined to get sick of each other. You can't wait to succeed so you can tell the other guys to bugger off, and it becomes f- you, no f- you…

Also, I had my brothers in the band, and I was the oldest. There was incredible rivalry.

Today, Fred and I, we have great feelings and we're looking at [playing in] 2016, which left me free for my Heavy Blues idea. My brother Robbie, who owns BTO, mailed me a week ago with some old photos from when we were little kids, and we were inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame last year. That was fantastic.

Ian Harrison

Randy Bachman's Heavy Blues is out now

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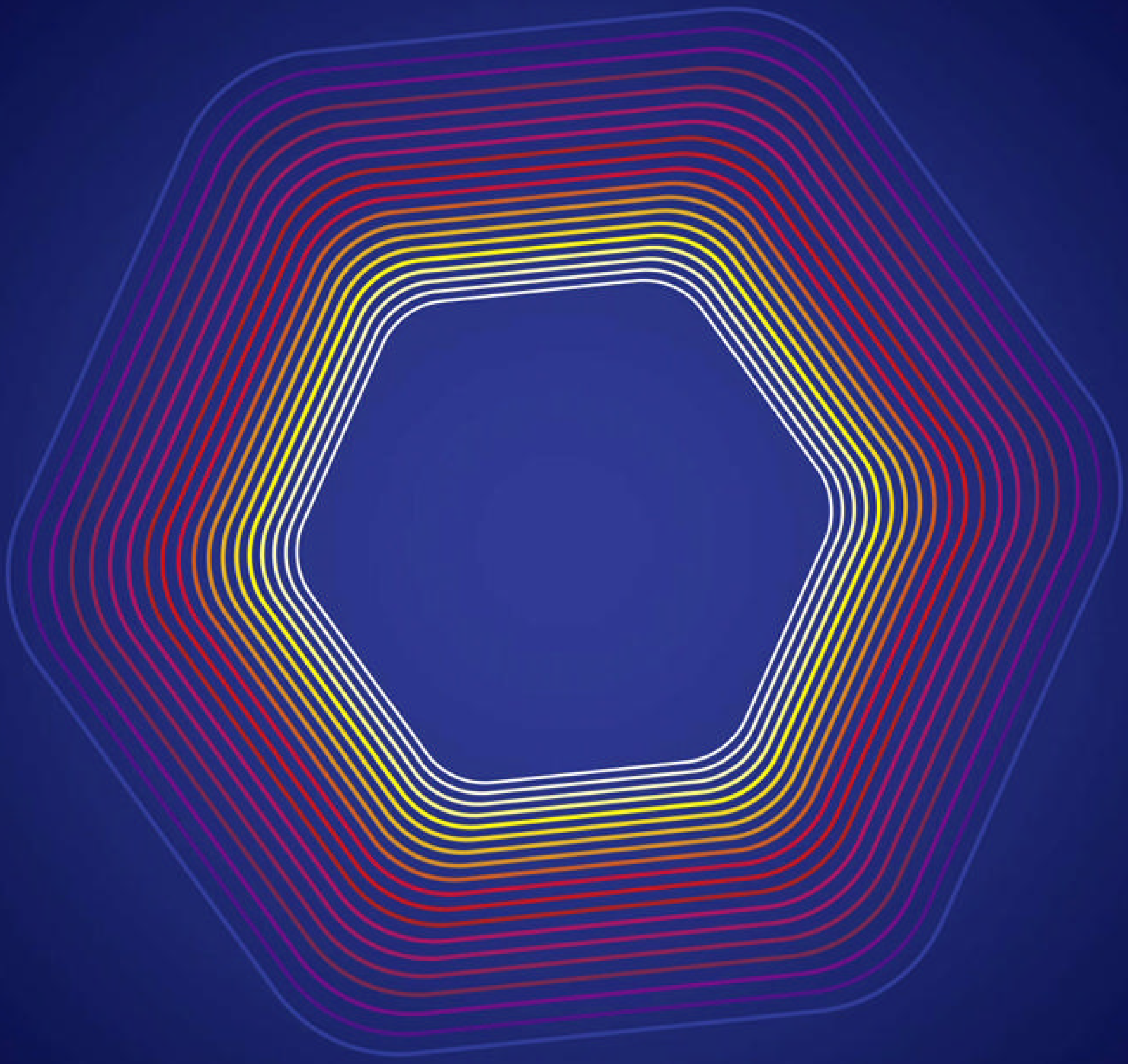

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